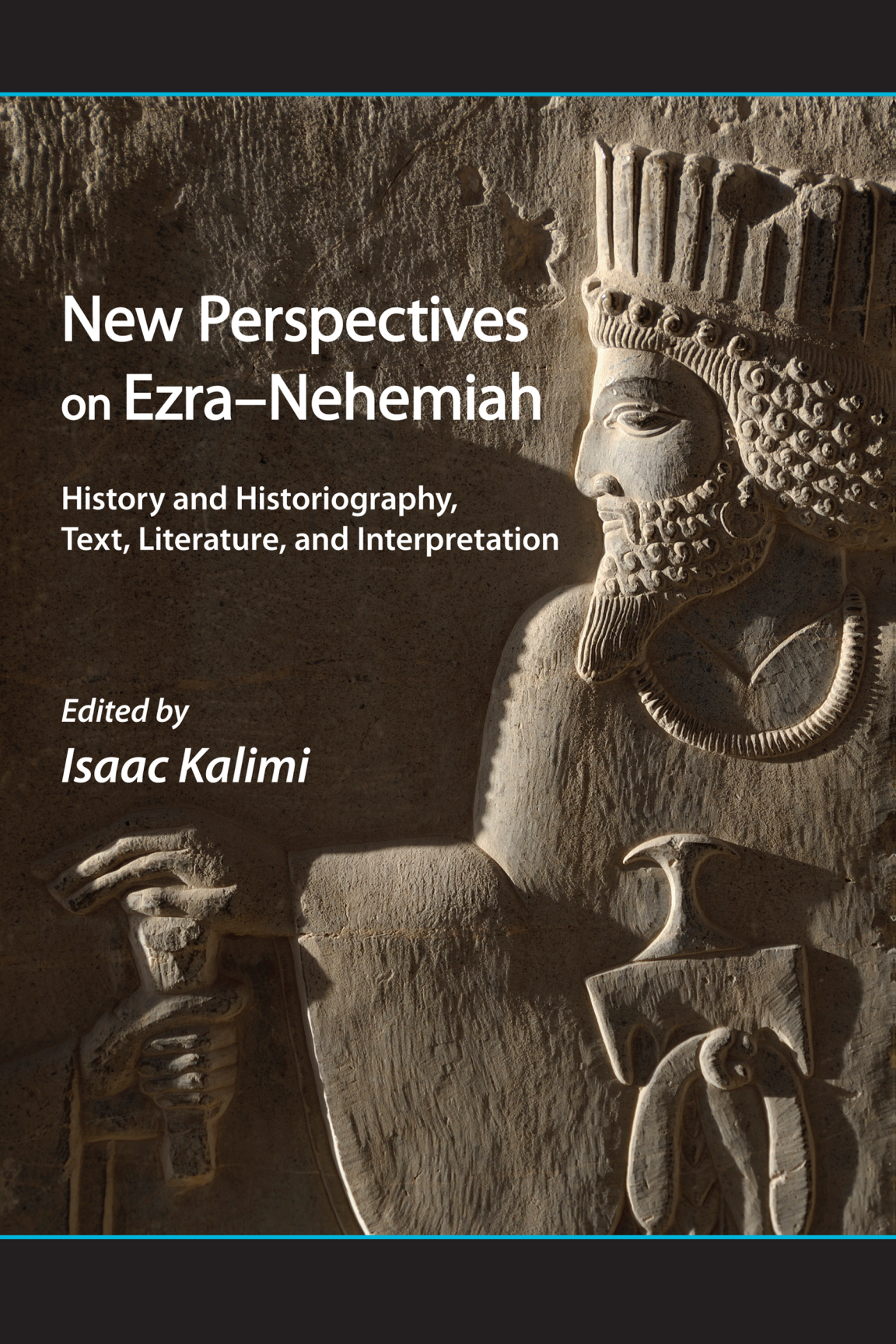


The background of the cover is a high-resolution photograph of an ancient stone relief. It depicts a bearded man, likely a monarch, wearing a tall, ornate crown with vertical spikes and a beard made of small, rounded curls. He is shown in profile, facing left. Below his head, there are other carved elements, including what appears to be a hand holding a scepter or staff on the left, and a shield or a similar emblem on the right. The stone is weathered and the lighting creates strong shadows, emphasizing the texture and three-dimensionality of the carvings.

New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah

History and Historiography,
Text, Literature, and Interpretation

Edited by
Isaac Kalimi

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah

New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah

*History and Historiography, Text,
Literature, and Interpretation*

Edited by
ISAAC KALIMI

Winona Lake, Indiana
EISENBRAUNS
2012

© 2012 by Eisenbrauns Inc.
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

www.eisenbrauns.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

New perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah : history and historiography, text, literature,
and interpretation / edited by Isaac Kalimi.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-57506-233-4 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Bible. O.T. Ezra—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Bible. O.T. Nehemiah—
Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Kalimi, Isaac.

BS1355.52.N49 2012

222'.706—dc23

2012004421

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American
National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library
Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.Ⓢ

To my children,

CHAVA, NISAN, ETAI, SARAH-RIVKA, *and*
ELNATHAN-MORDECHAI,

with love and the blessings of
Genesis 48:16 and Numbers 6:24–26.

Contents

List of Contributors	ix
Abbreviations	xii
In the Persian Period: New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah	1
ISAAC KALIMI	

Part One

History and Historiography

Ezra's Use of Documents in the Context of Hellenistic Rules of Rhetoric	11
LISBETH S. FRIED	
What Was Nehemiah Up To? Looking for Models for Nehemiah's Polity	27
LESTER L. GRABBE	
Nehemiah: Subject of the Empire, Subject of Writing	37
DON POLASKI	
Nehemiah as a "Court Jew"	61
KLAAS A. D. SMELIK	
Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition and Purpose	73
ODED LIPSCHITS	
On Nehemiah's City-Wall and the Size of Jerusalem during the Persian Period: An Archaeologist's View	101
DAVID USSISHKIN	
The Real History: The Theological Ideas Behind Nehemiah's Wall	131
MANFRED OEMING	
Some Issues in Ezra–Nehemiah	151
RAN ZADOK	

Part Two
Text, Literature, and Interpretation

Hidden Treasure: The Unpublished Doublet Catchwords in Ezra-Nehemiah	185
DAVID MARCUS	
Where Did the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites Settle? Revisiting the Text of Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX	197
DEIRDRE N. FULTON	
The Census List in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7: A Suggestion	223
PAUL L. REDDITT	
Nehemiah's Request on Behalf of Jerusalem	241
JOSEPH FLEISHMAN	
Prayer as Rhetoric in the Book of Nehemiah	267
MARK J. BODA	
Index of Authors	285
Index of Scripture	290

A List of Contributors

Mark J. Boda (Ph.D., Cambridge University) is Professor of Old Testament in the Faculty of Theology, McMaster University, Canada. He is the author of four books, including *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* (de Gruyter), and editor or co-editor of seven volumes, including *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 1: *The Origin of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (2006).

Joseph Fleishman (Ph.D., Bar-Illan University) is Professor of Hebrew Bible at Bar-Illan University, Ramat Gan, Israel. He specializes in biblical and ancient Near Eastern law, the Second Temple period as evident from a variety of sources, and Genesis in light of literary and historical research. He has published books and articles on these topics.

Lisbeth S. Fried (Ph.D., New York University) is currently Visiting Scholar at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, USA. She authored several articles and *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (2004).

Deirdre N. Fulton (Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University) is a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Theology at Boston College. She recently completed her dissertation, *Mapping Early Jewish Traditions: The Case of MT and LXX Nehemiah 11–12* (2011).

Lester L. Grabbe (Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University; Doctor of Divinity, The University of Hull) is Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism at the University of Hull in England. He has written extensively on the Persian period and on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, in particular *The History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (2004).

Isaac Kalimi (Ph.D., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) of the Oriental Institute–University of Chicago, is editor or co-editor of several volumes and author of numerous books, including: *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: A Historical Journey* (2009); *An Ancient Israelite Historian* (SSN 46; 2005); *Early Jewish Exegesis and Theological Controversy* (JCH 2; 2002); *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten* (BZAW 226; 1995); *The Books of Chronicles: A Classified Bibliography* (Simor Bible Bibliographies 1; 1990). His monograph, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (2005; repr., 2012) was the recipient of the 2006 R. B. Y. Scott Award, of

the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies “in recognition of an outstanding book in the areas of Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East.” Kalimi has received many awards, including National Endowment for the Humanities (2007–8), and Fulbright–University of Salzburg Distinguished Chair in Intercultural Theology and Study of Religions (2010–11).

Oded Lipschits (Ph.D., Tel Aviv University) is Professor of Jewish History in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures, Tel Aviv University, Israel. He is the director of the Ramat-Rahel Archaeological Project (together with M. Oeming), the author of *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (2005), co-author of *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah* (with D. Vanderhooft, 2011), and co-editor of *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (2003), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (2006), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (2007), and *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (2011).

David Marcus (Ph.D., Columbia University) is Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, USA. He is the author of the recently published fascicle of Ezra and Nehemiah in the new Biblia Hebraica Quinta series; as well as *From Balaam to Jonah: Anti-prophetic Satire in the Hebrew Bible*; *Jephthah and His Vow*; *A Manual of Akkadian*; and *A Manual of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic*.

Manfred Oeming (Ph.D., University of Bonn) wrote *Das wahre Israel : Studien zur Struktur und Intention der “genealogischen Vorhalle” 1Chr 1–9*. Since 1996, he has served as Chair of Old Testament Studies at the University of Heidelberg and was co-director of the Ramat-Rahel excavation (2005–10). Oeming has published *Introduction to Contemporary Hermeneutics* (2006); together with Oded Lipschits he edited *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (2006) and *Das Buch der Psalmen* (2001/2010); with Oded Lipschits and Gary Knoppers he edited *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (2011).

Paul L. Redditt (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University) is Professor of Old Testament Literature at Georgetown College, USA. Most of his publications deal with the Hebrew prophets and Daniel. He is also co-editor with Mark J. Boda of *Unity and Disunity in Ezra–Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, Reader* (2007).

Don Polaski (Ph.D., Duke University) teaches in the Religious Studies Department of the College of William and Mary, USA. He has published a co-authored textbook, *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach* (2008) and authored a monograph, *Envisioning Writing: Texts and Power in Early Judaism* (2009).

Klaas A. D. Smelik (D.Div, University of Amsterdam) is Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Ghent and is director of the Etty Hillesum Research Centre of the Ghent University, Belgium. He has

written many books and articles on the Hebrew Bible, ancient Hebrew inscriptions, Jewish history, and the history of antisemitism, as listed on <http://www.klaas-smelik.be> and <http://www.ehoc.ugent.be>.

David Ussishkin (Ph.D., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) is Professor emeritus of archaeology at Tel Aviv University, Israel. After completing his Ph.D. dissertation on Neo-Hittite monumental art, he joined the faculty of Tel Aviv University, where he taught archaeology of the land of Israel in the biblical period and ancient Anatolian art. Ussishkin conducted surveys and excavations in several major sites in Israel, notably the Silwan necropolis in Jerusalem, Lachish, Jezreel, and Betar, the last stronghold of the Second Jewish Revolt. He is currently a co-director of the ongoing excavation project at Megiddo. Ussishkin has written extensively on subjects of archaeology of the biblical period and Hittite art.

Ran Zadok (Ph.D., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) is Professor of Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Judaic studies in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations, Tel Aviv University, Israel. He has published books and articles on first-millennium Mesopotamia, the connections between Babylonia and Elam, preclassical Iran, ancient Near Eastern (including biblical) onomastics, Neo-Assyrian prosopography and Neo-/Late Babylonian texts, Israelite-Judean history in the Postexilic Period, and the toponymy and ethnic composition of the pre-Islamic Levant.

Abbreviations

Ancient Texts and General Abbreviations

Ag. Ap.	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
A.H.	in the year of Hegira
Ant.	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
BM	tablets in the collections of the British Museum
L	Leningrad Codex
LXX	Septuagint
Mm	Masorah magna
Mp	Masorah parva
MT	Masoretic Text
NM	Nehemiah Memoir
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
S1	Sassoon 1053

Reference Works

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
AB	Anchor Bible
AEL	Lichtheim, Miriam, editor. <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> . 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973–80
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AMI	<i>Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i>
ANET	Pritchard, J. B., editor. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i>
AS	Assyriological Studies
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BE	Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BJSUCSD	Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego

BKAT	Biblische Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>BHK³</i>	Kittel, R., editor. <i>Biblia Hebraica</i> . 3rd. ed. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1937
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
<i>BHS</i>	Elliger, K., and Rudolph, W., editors. <i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CAD	Oppenheim, A. L., et al., editors. <i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . 21 vols. (A–Z). Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011
<i>CAH</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament
<i>EncJud</i>	Roth, Cecil, editor. <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> . 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972
<i>ErIsr</i>	<i>Eretz-Israel</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTThKAT	Herder's Theologische Kommentar zum Alten Testament
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IrAnt</i>	<i>Iranica Antiqua</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal for Biblical Literature</i>
JBS	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
JCH	Jewish-Christian Heritage
<i>JCS</i>	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KTU</i>	Dietrich, M.; Loretz, O.; and Sanmartín, J., editors. <i>Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Alter Orient und Altes Testament 24. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976

KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
NABU	<i>Nouvelles assyriologiques brèves et utilitaires</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDOTTE	Van Gemenen, W. A., editor. <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testaments
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OTL	Old Testament Library
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIHANS	Publications de l'Institut historique: Archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RGTC	Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertations Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SHCANE	Studies on the History and the Culture of the Ancient Near East
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
SUNT	<i>Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments</i>
SUNVAO	Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske videnskaps-akademi i Oslo
TADAE	Porten, B., and Yardeni, A., editors. <i>Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt</i> . 4 vols. Jerusalem: Hebrew University–Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1986–99
TAVO	Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TDOT	Botterweck, G. J., and Ringgren, H., editors. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

In the Persian Period: New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah

An Introduction

ISAAC KALIMI

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Jewish and Christian canons are traditionally considered to be two parts of a single book called Ezra. The material collected therein focuses particularly on two short times in the history of Judah during the Persian period (539–332 B.C.E.): one recounts the events surrounding the Cyrus Decree in 538 B.C.E. until the inauguration of the Second Temple in 515 B.C.E.; the other relates the acts of the Judean spiritual and political leaders, Ezra and Nehemiah, roughly two generations later, under the rule of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia (464–424 B.C.E.; Ezra 7:1–7; Neh 1:1, 2:1). Despite the existence of other biblical prophetic, literary, and historical writings from the Persian period (e.g., the books of Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Chronicles, and Esther) and even with the interesting archaeological and epigraphical finds (e.g., Elephantine and Wadi Daliya papyri, short inscriptions, coins, seals, bullae) that shed light on specific issues, without a doubt, the material in Ezra/Ezra–Nehemiah remains the most important written source for the study of the various religious, social, and political issues, and it further describes Judah (and to some extent also Samaria) in the Persian era. It is also a unique example of the literary genre memoir and the development of late biblical historiography and Hebrew language. The purpose of this volume is to introduce the reader to the latest views on Ezra/Ezra–Nehemiah based on present research. It opens with Lisbeth S. Fried’s study “Ezra’s Use of Documents in the Context of Hellenistic Rules of Rhetoric.” She focuses on Cicero and Greco-Roman grammarians and rhetoricians from the 5th to the 1st centuries B.C.E., who established strict rules of historical writing. The essence of these rules is the use of the first person, a fixed feature of

history writing beginning with Herodotus. Other practices of good history writing at that time included the insertion of “official” documents in a narrative. These may have been reworked for the sake of rhetorical embellishment, as is assumed about the documents in Thucydides, or may have been entirely fabricated, as is assumed about the *Letter of Aristeeas*. The inclusion of lists of all kinds was also a popular mechanism used by historiographers to convey narrative veracity. Genuine lists were used if available, and fake ones if not. As with Thucydides’ speeches, the intention was always to convey matters as they “must have been” (Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.22). Moreover, to be understood as history writing by its audience, a document had to conform to what its contemporary audience already knew to be true. Thus, it had to correspond to a preexisting oral tradition. Fried examines the degree to which the book of Ezra abides by these rules of historiography. The essay attempts to apply the methodology of classicists in their study of the documents in Thucydides to the letters in Ezra. The goal is to determine if we have a verbatim presentation of actual letters, an embellishment of a historical kernel, or a complete fabrication. Fried hopes that the approach of the classicists will shed some light on what until now has been a vexing problem in the study of Ezra.

Lester L. Grabbe presents “What Was Nehemiah Up To? Looking for Models for Nehemiah’s Polity.” Nehemiah was appointed governor of *Yehud Madinta*, though this is strangely mentioned almost as an afterthought. His rule has been compared to that of a Greek tyrant, a Persian garrison commander, and a religious and legal reformer, among other things. Grabbe looks for and evaluates relevant models in the light of the text and archaeology and of the history of the wider Persian Empire.

The essay “Nehemiah: Subject of the Empire, Subject of Writing” by Don Polaski investigates how the book of Nehemiah presents its author as caught in the dynamic relationship between empire and colony. Because Nehemiah was both an imperial official and a Judean, his situation is ripe for investigation using the reading strategies of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism reads texts from colonial contexts, investigating the ways colonial subjects are created in imperial discourse and attending to possible points of resistance to this discourse. Polaski’s postcolonial reading of Nehemiah focuses on a key manifestation of imperial power: its use of writing. In his view, the book of Nehemiah includes two perspectives on Nehemiah’s relationship to the empire. First, in the Nehemiah memoir, one can see Nehemiah portraying himself in light of the tension between empire and colony. Nehemiah is loath to mention his office; he represents power in Yehud as oral and per-

sonal rather than written and imperial. But he does not reject writing. When Nehemiah writes his memoir, he elevates orality (resistance to an imperial technology of power?) but also makes imperial assumptions (texts are necessarily persuasive). Second, the redactor fashions a Nehemiah much more at home in the written world of imperial discourse. Ezra–Nehemiah emphasizes writing’s overarching authority. It prefaces the memoir with lengthy imperial correspondence and inserts into the memoir a ceremony celebrating the authority of the Torah within its midst. The editorial framework of Ezra–Nehemiah thus obscures Nehemiah’s original focus on the oral, assuming the power of texts and writing. In this way, Ezra–Nehemiah’s redactor adopts a much less conflicted stance regarding imperial authority, encouraging Yehudites to view themselves as colonial subjects.

Klaas A. D. Smelik’s chapter discusses “Nehemiah as a ‘Court Jew.’” In the 17th and 18th centuries C.E., court Jews (*Hofjuden*) played an important role in the administration of the various courts in the German Empire. This was a remarkable development because the Jews were a marginal minority in that period. But one can see this phenomenon also in other periods, for instance, the high position of Shmuel Ha-Nagid at the court of Granada in Muslim Spain. It is also a theme in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Joseph, Daniel and his fellows, Esther and Mordechai, and Ezra). All these Jews were confronted with the problem that they had to be loyal to their prince/emperor, but at the same time they wanted to protect their own people—the Jewish community to which they belonged. Smelik compares the court Jews in the German rulers’ yards and Nehemiah in the Persian Empire and investigates the role of Nehemiah as a “court Jew.” He attempts to uncover the extent to which Nehemiah was a loyal servant of the Persian king and how far he went to protect the Jewish community in Jerusalem and the surrounding area. His comparison with the European court Jews gives us a clearer view of Nehemiah’s involvement in the political situation.

The contribution of Oded Lipschits, “Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose” investigates the sources and the purpose of the list of builders of the wall around Jerusalem in Nehemiah 3. According to Lipschits, the editor seeks to highlight this event from a nationalistic point of view and secure Nehemiah’s place within the process. In his detailed discussion, he attempts to demonstrate that the list of the builders of the wall in Nehemiah 3 actually comprises all the organizers and financiers of the different parts of the walls. The organizers and financiers of the six gates were named in another form, and perhaps it is a sign of the importance that was assigned to the gates by the writer.

The list was meant to document the people who were responsible for the different parts of the wall. The editor of Nehemiah's memoir combined the two lists and inserted them together with other sources into his composition, emphasizing even more the importance of the gates. This editor inserted the list in an appropriate place—at the beginning of the preparations for and first steps of the building project. His goal was to emphasize Nehemiah's role in the process, as the one who initiated the project, led it, and faced the problems that threatened its completion. He succeeded in connecting Nehemiah's memoirs and the building process perfectly: according to the editorial verses he implements in the story, the walls became central during the period of the return and the focus of Nehemiah's deeds. The list of the builders of the wall demonstrates the national agreement and the people's reaction to Nehemiah's move, and this was the beginning of the actual building process, in spite of many difficulties. Nehemiah 4–5 demonstrates Nehemiah's role in the building process, in spite of the danger to his life (chap. 6). The main point of the book is the completion of the walls and the move toward the second stage—populating the city and its demographic reinforcement. Only when Nehemiah could make the order to close the gates of Jerusalem could he realize this second stage, and from that point on the wall became a monument that no one could miss.

In his article, "On Nehemiah's City Wall and the Size of Jerusalem during the Persian Period: An Archaeologist's View," David Ussishkin asserts that there are two possibilities for restoring the line of the city wall of Jerusalem as described by Nehemiah. According to the "minimalist" view (as advocated, for example, by Avi-Yonah, Tsafrir, Williamson, and Eshel), the city wall surrounded the City of David and the Temple Mount. According to the "maximalist" view (as advocated, for example, by Simons, Vincent, and Ben-Dov) Nehemiah's city wall also encompassed the Western Hill.

Without a doubt, the line of Nehemiah's wall followed the line of the city wall that fortified Jerusalem on the eve of the Babylonian conquest (587/6 B.C.E.). An analysis of the archaeological evidence related to Jerusalem during the second and first millennia B.C.E. indicates that the sole known city wall of the First Temple period also surrounded the Western Hill. The line of Nehemiah's wall encompassed the Western Hill, and thus Jerusalem of the Persian period must be reconstructed according to the "maximalist" view. The archaeological evidence indicates that large parts of the huge city remained uninhabited while the population concentrated around the City of David and the Temple Mount. Apparently, the restoration of the walls by Nehemiah was pri-

marily a symbolic, national, and political rather than a military act, done in an attempt to revive the city and resettle its vast intramural, mostly abandoned areas. These attempts largely failed. The conclusion that the city wall encompassed the Western Hill forms a basis for attempting to reconstruct the line of the wall as described in the biblical text and in particular the location of the various gates.

Manfred Oeming talks about “The Real History: The Theological Ideas behind Nehemiah’s Wall.” He asks why Jerusalem’s wall was so important that so many texts in the book dealt with it. He surveys varying arguments in recent scholarship that attempt to explain the wall’s importance from a Maccabean perspective: the wall discussed in the book of Nehemiah is argued to be a symbol for the massive wall constructed during the Maccabean times. Nehemiah’s construction report is a fictional projection into the days of Nehemiah (e.g., Böhler, Graetz, Finkelstein, Zwickel). A critical survey (in coordination with Na’aman and Lipschits) shows that there definitely was a wall around 450 B.C.E., even if it was small. The detailed construction report presented in Nehemiah has a historical basis. An analysis of the texts reveals that the construction was not driven only by military, economic, or political factors but also by the theological-ideological vision related to it. Scholars often underestimate how idealistic visions motivate large-scale communal projects. Oeming points out that theological concepts in Persian Judah could be find analogies in the surrounding ancient Near East (Hurowitz), other postexilic and Persian-period prophetic texts (Reinmuth), and late Psalms of Zion (Oeming, Vette). He points to a “theology of the wall”: God “needs” a “sacred city,” that is, a protected Temple area, in which His name can dwell and within which His Torah is strictly enacted (release of slaves, commitment to covenant, reading of Scripture, honoring of the Sabbath, ending of mixed marriages). This concept of a city and a people of God have lasting cultural influence to this day.

The study of Ran Zadok, “Some Issues in Ezra–Nehemiah,” closes this part of the volume. He claims that the “book of Nehemiah” was composed during the late Achaemenid and the ensuing early Hellenistic period (ca. 5th–3rd centuries B.C.E.). The research on this book enters a new stage with the recent inquiries into the general history of the empire of the Achaemenids and the Diadochi as well as the constant increase of epigraphic material from Judah and Idumea. Nehemiah is relatively rich in lists. Their updated reassessment is a desideratum. The relationship of the various sources in Nehemiah to the book of Chronicles is thoroughly investigated. The Nehemiah Memoir (NM) should be examined within the much wider framework of propagandistic

literature from the ancient Near East. Interesting results are obtained by a thorough analysis of the rich prosopographical material. Practical aspects of the cult in the Jerusalem temple are compared with the pertinent rich material from first millennium Babylonia.

The second part of the volume concentrates on "Text, Literature and Interpretation." It opens with David Marcus's study "Hidden Treasure: The Unpublished Doublet Catchwords in Ezra-Nehemiah." Marcus states that one of the features of the new *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ) is the inclusion on every page of both the Masorah parva (Mp) and magna of the Leningrad Codex (L). Only the Masorah parva had been published in previous editions of *Biblia Hebraica* (BH), a diplomatic representation in the third edition of *Biblia Hebraica Kittel* (BHK³), and a revised edition by Gérard E. Weil in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). While preparing the fascicle of Ezra-Nehemiah for BHQ, David Marcus noted that some Mp material written in the margins of the codex had never been published, neither in BHK³ nor in BHS. These are catchwords that are attached to many Mp doublet notes. Most Mp doublet notes are simply marked by the numeral 2, which indicates that an identical word or phrase appears somewhere else in the Hebrew Bible, though the reader is given no indication of where the parallel is. However, a special group of doublets has catchwords attached to the numerals indicating in what specific verse the parallel appears. In effect, the catchwords serve as memory aids explicitly reminding the reader where the parallel is to be found. Marcus brings examples to show how texts outside Ezra-Nehemiah were used by the Masoretes to elucidate elements in the text of Ezra-Nehemiah, and examples of the reverse, where the text of Ezra-Nehemiah was used to elucidate parallels in the texts outside of Ezra-Nehemiah. He also suggests how these catchwords can be used as a tool for exegesis by the modern biblical scholars.

Deirdre N. Fulton deals with a specific text from Nehemiah (Neh 11:25–36): "Where Did the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites Settle?" Indeed, biblical scholars have long been interested in lists and how they play a part in historical narratives. The list of settlers and the locations of their settlements in Neh 11:25–36 have been examined in light of similar settlement lists in Ezra 2, Nehemiah 7, and Joshua 15. However, in dealing with this evidence, little has been said about the differences in the length and number of settlements in the MT and LXX texts of Neh 11:25–36. The MT of Neh 11:25–36 is the longer text, listing several towns in the regions of Judah and Benjamin that the people settled in, while the LXX list is much shorter, with far fewer towns listed in Judah and Benjamin. Otherwise, the two texts are similar in content and or-

der. The differences in these lists point to the possibility of additions, omissions, or confusion in the text, but these differences have both literary and historical implications. There are basically two possible explanations for the differences: either the LXX is shorter because it had material omitted from the earlier MT list or the MT list had material added from an older list that resembled the LXX. In the case of the witnesses to Nehemiah 11, Fulton tackles several important questions regarding each settlement list: does this list reflect Judean settlement in the Persian period? Is this a reflection of an earlier list, used during the Persian or later Hellenistic period to bolster the size of Persian-period Judah? Is this a reflection of later Judean settlements in post-Persian Judah? If Nehemiah 11 is not taken as a reflection of any Judahite reality, then what is the purpose of this list in both its earlier and its later forms? Are they idealized projections of what an author(s) wished Judah to be? Fulton examines the differences between the MT and LXX versions and also the geographical implications concerning the size of Yehud presented in the two texts.

The interpretation of the census list in Ezra 2:1–3:1 and Neh 7:6–73 has long elicited scholarly discussion. This issue is reexamined here by Paul L. Redditt. Among other issues, the discussion focuses on how to understand the fact that the numbers by fathers' houses differ in places (totaling 29,818 in Ezra 2 and 31,099 in Nehemiah 7) and that the total population (42,360 plus 7,337 servants) is approximately 60% larger than the count in either Ezra or Nehemiah. Redditt undertakes an analysis of the lists to determine their composition and to offer a suggestion to account for the much higher total population. He suggests that the total itself was supplied independently of the lists and that the discrepancy between the total numbers by fathers' houses and cities and the number of the whole assembly (= total population) was one way the redactor communicated that not everyone in postexilic Judah belonged to the "true Israel." In arguing this position, Redditt first presents a brief overview of scholarly opinions about the census list; then he offers his own suggestion for understanding the list.

The chapter, "Nehemiah's Request on Behalf of Jerusalem" by Joseph Fleishman delves into the contents of Nehemiah's request at the banquet (Neh 2:1–9). The focal point of the event, which followed Nehemiah's decision to come to Jerusalem's rescue when it was deemed necessary, was the necessity of obtaining King Artaxerxes I's permission and support. Fleishman attempts to show that, in line with his mindful and practical character, Nehemiah planned very carefully both the timing and the formulation of his request. The tactics and the rhetoric

he used at the meeting with the king were critical in achieving the desired results. Although Nehemiah's moves may be understood to a large extent on their own merit, reading Neh 2:1-9 and keeping in mind Zoroastrian principles, which Nehemiah emphasized before the king, helps us understand the complexity of the literal meaning of Scripture in discussion of this topic and enables us to sound the depths of Nehemiah's request.

Mark J. Boda's discussion, "Prayer as Rhetoric in the Book of Nehemiah," ends the volume. Taking the lead from recent literary models for the interpretation of prayer, he investigates the role of prayer within the rhetoric of the book of Nehemiah. He attempts to show how the initial prayer in Neh 1:5-11 draws the reader's attention not only to the piety of the main autobiographical character, a piety that will be highlighted throughout the book, but also to the role this character will play in creating conditions that will facilitate similar piety in the community as a whole. While the first half of the book of Nehemiah focuses on the chief character as an agent of renewal of the city's infrastructure, clearly the second half shifts this focus onto the main character as an agent of renewal of the city's communal and spiritual rhythms. The placement of the two longest prayers at Nehemiah 1 and 9 accentuates this shift in the rhetorical shape of the book as a whole.

It is hoped that the range of fresh studies gathered in this volume contribute a better understanding of different issues in Ezra/Ezra-Nehemiah and will stimulate and encourage further research on this enthralling late biblical historical writing.

Part One

History and Historiography

Ezra's Use of Documents in the Context of Hellenistic Rules of Rhetoric

LISBETH S. FRIED

The literary and historical problems concerning Ezra 1–6 have plagued readers and exegetes since antiquity. These chapters are ostensibly about the construction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and culminate in the temple's dedication in the sixth year of Darius I. The source of the difficulty is the inclusion in chap. 4 of a letter to King Artaxerxes I, the grandson of Darius I. Though in canonical Ezra the letter to Artaxerxes has nothing to do with the story of the Temple's construction but is only about building Jerusalem's city wall, the author of 1 Esdras adds the statement that the Jews who had arrived in Jerusalem were not only rebuilding that rebellious city but were also "laying the foundations of the temple" (2:17).¹ Thus, 1 Esdras explains the inclusion of the letter by putting it in the context of temple building. It is clear not only from this addition to the letter but also from 1 Esdras's arrangement of the chapters that its author assumes that the Darius under whom the temple was dedicated must have followed Artaxerxes. The chapters in 1 Esdras about the three youths and the return to Judah under Zerubbabel follow the letters to and from Artaxerxes and precede the letters to and from Darius. This is 1 Esdras's attempt to make sense out of the confusing array of narrative and letters in Ezra.²

Josephus deals with the confusion by changing the names of both Xerxes and Artaxerxes (of Ezra 4 = 1 Esdras 2) to "Cambyses" and

Author's note: This essay is indebted to the work of Sylvie Honigman in *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003) and to her comments and those of H. Williamson on an earlier draft of the essay.

1. It is not likely that the author of our canonical Ezra would have *removed* this statement from his text or even that it dropped out.

2. For a discussion of the relative priority of 1 Esdras versus canonical Ezra, see *Was 1 Esdras First? An Investigation into the Priority and Nature of 1 Esdras* (ed. L. S. Fried; Ancient Israel and Its Literature 7; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

merging their letters into one (*Ant.* 11:22). Thus, he puts everything into its correct chronological order. The commentary ascribed to Rashi³ makes sense of these chapters by concluding that Artaxerxes was the throne name of all the Persian kings. Artaxerxes to whom the letter was sent in Ezra 4 was in fact the throne name of Cyrus, and Artaxerxes under whom Ezra and Nehemiah served was the throne name of Darius (ascribed to Rashi on Ezra 4:7).

Modern commentators are equally mystified. Batten moves his discussion of the Aramaic letters in chap. 4 to follow his discussion of the Aramaic letters to and from Darius, thereby putting them in correct chronological order.⁴ Torrey (followed most recently by Edelman) concludes that the documents are wholesale forgeries, but that they follow the order of the Persian kings that was assumed in Jerusalem at the time—Cyrus, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius II.⁵ Most commentators conclude the documents are genuine, however. Had they been forgeries, the author would have made Cyrus or Darius the addressee, rather than Xerxes and Artaxerxes, so that the chronology would make sense.

Like Torrey, however, most commentators agree that the letters are included to serve a literary purpose. Porten argues that the author arranged the three letters in Ezra 4–7 from the most negative to the most positive for literary effect.⁶ Clines suggests that these letters in chaps. 4–6 function to illustrate the methods of the provincial government in resisting the plans of God and to fill the gap between 538 and 520.⁷ Williamson suggests that, because the author had just recorded a harsh rejection by Zerubbabel and his colleagues to the offer of these enemies to participate in temple building, he used these letters to demonstrate that his assessment of them as enemies later proved to be correct. This is close to the position suggested in this essay.⁸ Eskenazi argues that the

3. See I. Kalimi, *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: A Historical Journey* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009) 189–242.

4. L. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913).

5. C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1970) 140–57; D. Edelman, *The Origins of the 'Second' Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005) 180–208.

6. B. Porten, "The Documents in the Book of Ezra and the Mission of Ezra," *Shnaton* 3 (1978–79) 194 [Hebrew].

7. D. J. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 76.

8. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 57. Williamson does not clarify, however, that, unless the king under whom the temple is dedicated is Darius II, the "enemies" who are shown bribing officials

letter to Artaxerxes regarding the wall is germane to temple building.⁹ To the biblical writer, the temple includes the entire city, and the temple and the city would not be complete until Nehemiah comes in the 20th year of that same Artaxerxes to build the wall. The dedication of the house of God in Ezra 6:14–21 is only cursorily described because the city itself is not yet built. Japhet suggests that the biblical author wrote according to what she terms “the documentary imperative.”¹⁰ This “imperative” led him to employ source material even out of context. When he has no source to prove a point he’s made for one historical context, he takes a document from another time period and uses that.¹¹ Bedford suggests that the controversy between the returnees and the “peoples of the lands” was created simply to explain the delay in temple building.¹²

Recently, Steiner argued that the core of Ezra 4–6 is one archival document, with the letters to and from Darius I incorporated as an appendix at the end of the letters to and from Artaxerxes I. This explains the reverse chronological order of the letters, that is, why the letters to and from Darius I come after the letters to and from Artaxerxes I. The biblical author stuck the document into his text in its entirety.¹³ According to Steiner:

The biblical author . . . was fully aware of the correct order of the Persian kings and the reverse chronological ordering of his Aramaic source. He was consequently faced with an unusually difficult literary problem: how does one insert such a document into a chronologically ordered narrative? He hit upon a solution of extraordinary ingenuity. First he created a digression about attempts to thwart Jewish plans for reconstruction. He began the digression in 4:4–5. . . . In 4:6 he transformed the digression into a flashforward [into the reign of

to prevent the temple being built cannot be the same “enemies” who write to Xerxes and Artaxerxes to prevent the wall from being built.

9. T. C. Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra–Nehemiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 56.

10. S. Japhet, “‘History’ and ‘Literature’ in the Persian Period: The Restoration of the Temple,” *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006; repr., 2011) 162.

11. This is also close to the view suggested here.

12. P. R. Bedford, *Temple Restoration in Early Achaemenid Judah* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 112.

13. R. C. Steiner, “Bishlam’s Archival Search Report in Nehemiah’s Archive: Multiple Introductions and Reverse Chronological Order as Clues to the Origin of the Aramaic Letters in Ezra 4–6,” *JBL* 125 (2006) 641–85.

Xerxes]. . . . In 4:7, he extended the flashforward into the reign of Artaxerxes.¹⁴

Thus, to Steiner, the biblical writer created the dissension in order to incorporate the document. Steiner does not say exactly why the author was so intent on incorporating the letter, and why it was so necessary for him to keep it intact when the author of 1 Esdras saw no problem in splitting it into its component parts. Steiner argues that the document was from Nehemiah's archive, that it originated as a response to Nehemiah's request to Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem's city wall. Unfortunately, Steiner does not tell us why that crucial bit of information is absent from our text, nor does he explain why the document shows up here, in chaps 4–6 of Ezra in the context of temple building, and not in the context of the wall-building in the book of Nehemiah itself.

As noted in this brief overview, writers both ancient and modern have been baffled by the inclusion of the letter to Artaxerxes in Ezra 4, and much ink has been spilled accounting for it. Modern commentators generally assume that the controversy depicted in Ezra 4:1–5 was created to explain the letters that the biblical author had at hand. Few explain why the author felt it necessary to include the letters even if he had them.

Torrey argues, in contrast, that “from the literary point of view . . . this is all according to rule. . . . At first the villain triumphs, not by fair means, but through misrepresentation; but in the end he is overwhelmed.”¹⁵ In his view, the author created the controversy not in order to include the documents but to create drama in the story. He then used the fictional letters to prove the veracity of the controversy he created. The order of the letters is according to the order of the kings as it was known in the early Hellenistic period when the book was written.

Thus, there are two competing hypotheses regarding the inclusion of the correspondence with Artaxerxes: (1) the controversy in Ezra 4:1–5 was created to explain the genuine letters that predated the book, and (2) the controversy and the letters were both composed to create drama in the text.

Neither of these provides a satisfactory explanation, to my way of thinking. Neither explains why a controversy about wall building should be included in a story that seems to be at heart about temple building. It

14. *Ibid.*, 674.

15. Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 160.

is the purpose of this paper to examine these hypotheses and to investigate the reason behind the peculiar literary composition of Ezra 1–6.

The Framework of Ezra 1–6

I have argued elsewhere that Ezra 1–6 is based on the Second Temple's actual bilingual building inscription.¹⁶ It is clear, however, that these chapters in Ezra are not just a simple building inscription. They are a hodgepodge: they are in both Hebrew and Aramaic, they include letters to and from a series of different Persian kings, they include a narrative segment about squabbles between various groups of peoples, they include lists of vessels and lists of returning residents, none of which belongs to the building-inscription genre. Why was all this extraneous material included? If the purpose of Ezra 1–6 was to tell the story of the temple's construction, why was not the building story itself sufficient? That it was obviously not sufficient implies that the story of the temple's construction, or even of its legitimacy, is not the purpose of Ezra 1–6. The goals of this essay are to understand the organization of these chapters, to try to arrive at the reason for including the lists, the narrative, and the letters, and to understand the purpose of these chapters.

Date of Composition

Williamson has argued that Ezra 1–6 was composed after Ezra 7–Nehemiah 13 was already completed.¹⁷ Further, both James VanderKam and I have independently tried to show that the reference to Darius the Persian in Nehemiah (Neh 12:22) is a reference to Darius III, not Darius II, and that the list of high priests mentioned in that verse is complete.¹⁸ If so, then Ezra 7–Nehemiah 13 was written in the Hellenistic

16. L. S. Fried, "The Land Lay Desolate: Conquest and Restoration in the Ancient Near East," *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 21–54; idem, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (BJSUCSD 10; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) 158–77.

17. H. G. M. Williamson, "The Composition of Ezra i–vi," *JTS* n.s. 34 (1983) 1–30.

18. L. S. Fried, "A Silver Coin of Yoḥanan Hakkôhen," *Transeuphratène* 26 (2003) 65–85, pls. II–V; J. C. VanderKam, "Jewish High Priests of the Persian Period: Is the List Complete?" *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (ed. G. A. Anderson and S. M. Olyan; JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,

period, after Darius III and after the advent of Alexander the Great, and Ezra 1–6 was also written in the Hellenistic period, under either Alexander or under the Ptolemies at the end of the 4th century.

Hellenistic Rules of Rhetorical Composition

If Ezra–Nehemiah was composed in the Hellenistic period, we may reasonably expect Hellenistic influences on the text.¹⁹ It may not be anachronistic therefore to compare the text to Hellenistic ideals of rhetorical composition. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, and rhetorical composition spans the genres: speeches, histories, tragedies, comedies, all seek to persuade the audience.²⁰ Interpreting Ezra 1–6 according to rules of rhetoric may help us understand what the reader is to be persuaded of, and why the lists, the narrative, and the documents were included in the temple-building story.

According to Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), texts have three ways to persuade (*Rhetoric* 1356a1). The first is by the personal character of the author—readers are more likely to be persuaded when they trust the author. The second depends on eliciting a positive emotional response from the reader, one disposed in favor of the writer (when the author writes in a forensic or historiographic context, the author must also elicit in the reader a positive emotional response toward the people he defends and a negative one toward the people he attacks). The third route to persuasion is the most important: the proof or apparent proof of the truth of the claim being made. Aristotle describes two types of proofs, internal and external. The internal proof is the argument and may either be deductive (by syllogisms) or inductive (by examples). External proofs are provided by witnesses, documents, written contracts, letters, and so on.

According to the rhetorical handbooks, a text ought to consist of four parts: prologue, narration, proof, and epilogue.²¹ The prologue

1991) 67–91; idem, *From Joshua to Caiaphas: High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004) 85–99.

19. For Hellenistic cultural influences on the societies of the Levant, see most recently the articles in Y. Levin, ed., *A Time of Change: Judah and Its Neighbors During the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods* (London: T. & T. Clark) forthcoming.

20. C. Pelling, *Literary Texts and the Greek Historian* (London: Routledge, 2000) 1–2.

21. J. Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1989) 13. Although originally intended for the orator, with the progress of

should laud the character of the author and, in a forensic or historiographic text, the character of the men being defended; the epilogue should put the reader in a positive frame of mind and arouse a positive emotion toward the writer and the men he defends. Between the prologue and epilogue fall the narrative and the proofs. In a forensic or historiographic context, the narration provides the version of events to be proved. The centerpiece of the entire text is the proof—either internal or external. It alone actually persuades.

If Ezra 1–6 was composed according to Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography, then the chapters ought to be divisible into these four components: prologue, narration, proofs, and epilogue.

Prologue

Does Ezra 1–6 contain a prologue, and, if so, which chapters are included in it? According to the hypothesis, the letters should function as external proofs offered to justify a narrative. Because the letters have only to do with the events in Ezra 4:1–3, these verses must form the narrative to be proved, and everything before them must be prologue. We can test the hypothesis. If chaps. 1–3 are prologue, they would have been written solely to increase readerly confidence in the author and in those he defends, in this case, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and his colleagues. To Aristotle, these things inspire confidence: (1) the author's apparent knowledge of his subject and (2) his and his characters' high moral quality and the goodwill they display toward the community of the implied reader (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378a6).

As noted above, I had previously assumed that the author based his text on the actual Second Temple's building inscription. Nevertheless, the list of temple vessels deposited by Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:9–11) and the list of the returnees to Judah (Ezra 2) have no place within the temple-building-story genre. If the author is following Hellenistic rules of rhetoric, however, then he would have inserted both lists in his prologue to display his detailed knowledge of the subject under discussion. Thus, these lists may have been added, not because the author had them at hand, but to increase the reader's confidence in the historical reliability of the text and the author's access to privileged sources.

writing, the rules of rhetoric were quickly applied to written texts (T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998] 190–226).

Indeed lists, whether genuine or fictive, were a favorite device used by Greek historians to bolster the credibility of their history. Ctesias, for example, presents his readers with a spurious list of Assyrian kings that he claims to derive from Persian royal archives. He created the list to increase his credibility.²² The fictive list of translators in the *Letter of Aristeas* 47–50 is another example of the addition of lists to increase the credibility of the text and to display the writer's knowledge of his subject.²³ Herodotus's provision of the minutest details of the peoples, places, and events that he describes are likely intended to persuade the reader of his access to the sources rather than to provide historical facts, because his statements and the facts often conflict.²⁴ To show their command of the subject matter, historians also included genealogies in their reports, avoiding gaps by filling in the genealogies with spurious names. Herodotus's genealogies of the Spartan kings (7:204, 8:131), for example, is partly historical and partly fictive, reaching back to Heracles. The genealogies of Jesus (Matt 1:2–16, Luke 3:23–38) link Jesus to David for obvious reasons, but do not agree even on the name of his paternal grandfather.

Besides exhibiting his command of the subject, rules of rhetoric demand that the author use the prologue to convince his readers of his and his characters' high moral character. He must also convince his audience of his own good will toward them. A reader will be more trusting of an author and of those he defends if their high moral character and good will are convincing. Chapter 3 begins by stating that as soon as the returnees were settled in their towns, they gathered as one man in Jerusalem to build the altar to the God of Israel according to the law of Moses. They kept the festivals as prescribed, and offered the number and type of sacrifices that were required. Not only did they carefully follow the laws of Moses, but they also dutifully obeyed the edict of Cyrus by laying the foundations of the temple according to his directions, by paying the carpenters and masons their correct fees, and by bringing cedar trees from Phoenicia by sea to Jaffa as Cyrus authorized. The concern shown by Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the returnees for the laws of both God and Cyrus testify not only to their own high moral quality but also to the high moral quality of the author. The enthusiasm

22. The list of kings is quoted in Eusebius's *Chronici canones* and preserved in J.-P. Migne, *Collection Intégrale et Universelle Des Orateurs Sacrés Du Premier et Du Second Ordre* (Paris: Gaume, 1892) 19:325–28.

23. Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 72.

24. S. West, "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985) 278–305.

depicted in building the altar and laying the foundations as soon as they arrive in Judah not only testifies to their own good will toward God, toward the Persian king, and toward the Jewish community, to which the implied reader presumably belongs, but it also exhibits the good will of the author. The inclusion of these events are consistent with rhetorical rules of Hellenistic historiography.

I have argued previously that the altar is one of the last things constructed when a temple is being rebuilt.²⁵ According to Mesopotamian temple-building protocol, the description in Ezra 3 of the altar and the sacrifices made on it is out of place. This type of description is usually placed at the end of Mesopotamian temple-building stories. By moving the scene from the end to the beginning, the author immediately conveys the piety, the high moral standards, and the good will of both himself and of those he portrays. In doing so, he also reveals the Hellenistic origin of the text. In Mesopotamia and Egypt, the great temples were the gods' homes and the twice-daily sacrifices their food. Thus, the temple was built first and the god ushered into it in order for sacrifices to begin. In contrast, the ancient Greek sanctuary consisted simply of an altar with a surrounding fence marking out the sacred district. There was usually no temple present at all.²⁶ Only rarely and usually much later would a temple be built. This is the pattern we see in Ezra 3.

These results suggest that the first three chapters of Ezra were written to follow the structure and content prescribed by Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography. They do not follow the typical Mesopotamian temple-building-story genre. Looking at the text in this way provides a fresh understanding of these chapters.

Narrative and Proofs

If the first three chapters of Ezra provide the rhetorical prologue to Ezra 1–6, then the reader should now be convinced of the knowledge, high moral quality, and good will of both the author and of those he defends—Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the returnees in general. If the author continues to follow Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography, the second section should be a narrative followed by proof of the narrative's veracity. The goal of a rhetorical composition is to persuade the reader of the truth of the events as narrated and must, *ex hypotheosi*,

25. Fried, "The Land Lay Desolate."

26. J. D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Blackwell Ancient Religions 2; West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

have been the goal of Ezra 1–6. Thus, the documents would have been included to prove the veracity of the narrative, rather than the narrative having been created as a context for the documents.

Part 1

The first part of the narrative begins in Ezra 4:1–5.

When the enemies (*šārê*) of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returnees were building the temple of YHWH the god of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' [houses] and said to them, "Let us build with you, for like you, we have been inquiring of your god and to him we have been sacrificing from the days that Esarhaddon king of Assyria had brought us up here.

But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' [houses] of Israel said to them, "It is not for you, but it is for us to build the house of our god for we alone will build to YHWH the god of Israel just as Cyrus king of Persia commanded us." Then the *ʿam hāʾāreš* undermined the resolve [lit., weakened the hands] of the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build. They bribed ministers in order to thwart their plans all the years of Cyrus, King of Persia and up to the reign of Darius, King of Persia. (Ezra 4:1–5)

According to the events narrated here, the *ʿam hāʾāreš* are the enemies (*šārê*) of Judah and Benjamin. The author accuses these "enemies" of hiring officials to prevent the Jews from building the Temple of YHWH from the years of Cyrus up to the reign of Darius.²⁷ According to the laws of rhetoric, the narration should now be followed by proofs, and it is. An accusing letter that these enemies sent to King Xerxes (4:6) and a second accusing letter that another group (of enemies) sent to King Artaxerxes are mentioned (4:8). A third letter was also sent to Artaxerxes by a third group of people. This last letter and the king's response to it (4:17–22) are incorporated verbatim into the text of Ezra.²⁸

In closing this section, the biblical writer repeats the final clause of Ezra 4:5 in 4:24. Both verses (4:5, 24) refer to King Darius of Persia. Ezra 4:4–5 states:

27. I discuss the identity of these *ʿam hāʾāreš* in "The *ʿam hāʾāreš* in Ezra 4:4 and Persian Imperial Administration," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 123–45.

28. The second letter may just have been written to quote the third letter. See Steiner, "Bishlam's Archival Search."

Then the *‘am hā’areš* undermined the resolve of the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build. They bribed ministers in order to thwart their plans all the years of Cyrus, King of Persia and up to the reign of Darius, King of Persia.

Ezra 4:24 concludes the first phase of the narrative:

Then the work on the House of God in Jerusalem stopped and remained in abeyance until the second year of the reign of Darius, King of Persia. (Ezra 4:24)

Commentators point out that the repetition of the final phrase of 4:5 in 4:24 signals that the intervening material is a digression.²⁹ A resumptive clause occurs when an author inserts material into a text and repeats the verse on either side of the inserted material to indicate the insertion. The resumption allows the reader to pick up the narrative where it had left off. The intervening material is regarded as parenthetical and the repeated verses as a set of parentheses. Although Ezra 4:24 does not repeat 4:5 exactly, it still serves as a *Wiederaufnahmen*, a resumptive clause. Ezra 4:4–5 states that the *‘am hā’areš* bribed officials and so frustrated the plans of the Jews from the time of Cyrus up until the reign of Darius. Ezra 4:24 states that building began again in the second year of that same Darius. The intervening verses, vv. 6–23, while parenthetical, are not irrelevant. They are meant to demonstrate exactly how *‘am hā’areš* frustrated the plans of the Jews during all these years: not only did they bribe officials but they also wrote accusing letters to the kings.

The resumptive clause, Ezra 4:24, brings the narrative back to the literary present, back to the second year of Darius when the second phase of the narrative begins. The proofs offered in this first phase of the narrative are, as noted, the letter to Xerxes and the letters to and from Artaxerxes. Private letters between individuals have been part and parcel of Greek history writing since Herodotus.³⁰ Van den Hout examines nine letters that Herodotus quotes in full and states in conclusion that “no one will doubt that Herodotus never saw the letters of which he presents the direct text.”³¹ Herodotus includes the letters not because the subjects of his history wrote them and he happened to have them but in part to enliven the story. Rosenmeyer suggests however that let-

29. J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah, a Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 111; Williamson, “The Composition of Ezra i–vi;” idem, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 57.

30. Herodotus’s letters have been cataloged by M. van den Hout, “Studies in Early Greek Letter-Writing,” *Mnemosyne* 4/2 (1949) 19–41, esp. pp. 25–28.

31. Ibid, 28. So also, West, “Herodotus’ Epigraphical Interests.”

ters in historical works play the same role as do reported speeches, and we are all familiar with Thucydides' famous explanation of the speeches he incorporates into his history (I:22). Letters were a device that allowed speeches to take place between people who were far apart.³² As Thucydides makes clear, however, the historian is obligated to make the speeches, and the letters reflect the gist of what was actually said or written to the best that he is able. Neither speeches nor letters should be the creation of the historian; rather, they should be the creation of the perpetrator, even though they may be expressed in the historian's words.³³

The question at issue is exactly how does the correspondence with Xerxes and with Artaxerxes demonstrate the truth of the author's statement that the 'am hā'areṣ, these enemies of the Jews, prevented them from building their temple in the time of Darius? The answer is they do not. The author seems not to have had direct evidence available to him to prove his contention that the 'am hā'areṣ had bribed officials to prevent the temple from being built. Had he had direct proof, he would have provided it. Indeed, as commentators have long known, this is the greatest indication of the authenticity of the letters. If he had forged the letters, he would have placed them in the time of Darius. Why does he include the letters then? What do they prove? What the letters do is demonstrate not that these men in particular but that the 'am hā'areṣ in general were the type of people who *would* write slanderous letters to prevent the temple from being built. They wrote slanderous letters in the time of Artaxerxes to prevent Jerusalem's city wall from being built, and so they were the sort who would write letters to prevent the temple from being built. According to Aristotle, when praising or accusing a man in a judicial proceeding, it is necessary to show that his acts are intentional, and this is all the easier if it can be shown that he is in the habit of doing such things (*Rhetoric* 1367b20). Aristotle advises that, "even if a man has not actually done a given good (or bad) thing, we shall bestow praise (or blame) on him, if we are sure that he is the sort of person who *would* do it" (*Rhetoric* 1367b33). By showing just what the 'am hā'areṣ had done in the time of Artaxerxes, the letters demonstrate the character of 'am hā'areṣ in general and show just what they are in the habit of doing. Once the devious character of this sort of person has been demonstrated, according at least to Aristotle's rules of foren-

32. P. A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 46.

33. C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) 142–45.

sic rhetoric, they can be blamed for other similar actions for which no actual external proofs are available. Part 1 of the narrative ends with the following verses:

When the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and their associates, they hurried to the Jews in Jerusalem and with the might of the troops made them stop. (Ezra 4:23)

It should be clear that the work that is referred to here, the work that was stopped by order of Artaxerxes and by the satrapal forces of Rehum and Shimshai, was the work on Jerusalem's city wall, not on the temple. Ezra 4:23 is followed by the resumptive clause:

Then the work on the House of God in Jerusalem stopped and remained in abeyance until the second year of the reign of Darius, King of Persia. (Ezra 4:24)

Because this is a resumptive clause, the "then" does not connect this statement to the verse immediately before it, but rather to verse 4:5. It is when the *'am hā'areš* bribed officials to try to prevent the temple being built that the work on the temple was stopped until the reign of Darius. We do not know when work on the temple was stopped. The stoppage is dated by 4:1 to the time of Zerubbabel, so also the time of Darius. Nor are we told how long the stoppage lasted; it may have been for the year or two at the beginning of Darius's reign. It may have only been for a few months. Ezra 5:8 records Tattenai's letter to Darius, written probably in that king's second year, that "the house of the great God is being built of hewn stone, and timber is laid in the walls; the work is being done diligently and prospers in their hands." Thus, work had progressed quite a bit beyond simply the foundations.³⁴

Part 2

The second phase of the narrative with its associated proofs begins in Ezra 5 in Aramaic:

Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak set out to rebuild the house of God in

34. Hag 1:8 records Haggai's order to the Jews to collect wood for the paneling. If it was to build the actual structure they would have been told to quarry stones, not to cut wood (cf. 1:4, where the people have paneled houses, but God's house is still in ruins).

Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them.
(Ezra 5:1–2)

These verses echo Ezra 3:2, except for the addition of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah and the switch to Aramaic. Haggai and Zechariah's prophesying encourages Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and their colleagues to trust in God and to proceed with the work on the temple in spite of the attempts of the *'am hā'areš*. The narrative continues:

At the same time Tattenai the governor of the province Beyond the River and Shethar-bozenai and their associates came to them and spoke to them thus, "Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?" We [the Persian satrapal officials] also asked them this, "What are the names of the men who are building this building?" The eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them [from building] until a report reached Darius and then answer was returned by letter in reply to it. (Ezra 5:3–5)

The proof that Tattenai, governor of Beyond the River, wrote to Darius to investigate the Jews' authority to build the temple is contained in the letter incorporated in full into the text. The letter quotes the Jews as stating that Cyrus had given them permission to rebuild the temple and that he had also given them the temple vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had confiscated. Proof of the Jews' claim lies in the memorandum of Cyrus himself which is included in the document. Not only does Darius confirm the Jews' version of events, but he orders that temple building not be hindered and that the building costs and the costs of the temple sacrifices be paid out of the royal revenues. Moreover, he commands that anyone altering his decree, or caught trying to destroy the house of God, should have a beam pulled out of his own house, be impaled upon it, and his house made into a dunghill! (Ezra 6:11).

By providing these letters to and from Darius, the author demonstrates the authenticity of this aspect of his narrative. According to the letters brought as proof, Tattenai, the satrap over all of Beyond the River, came to investigate the temple-building project, most likely in the second year of Darius. Tattenai's investigation may have been in response to accusing letters sent to Darius by *'am hā'areš*, letters that unfortunately we do not have. In his response to Tattenai, Darius confirms the Jewish version of events, and temple building is able to continue. This portion of the narrative demonstrates that the Jewish version of events is confirmed and supported by Darius.

The pattern that is apparent in Ezra 4–6 (a narration and its associated proof, plus an additional narration and its proof) is the ap-

proach demanded by Aristotle when the narrative threatens to become too long. Aristotle states that it is sometimes desirable not to make the whole narrative continuous if the case thus expounded is hard to keep in mind (*Rhetoric* 1416b22). The author should present one set of facts and prove it, present another and prove it. This is the pattern we see here in Ezra 1–6.

If the biblical author is following Aristotle's rules of rhetoric, an epilogue should follow, which should create a positive mood in the reader.

Epilogue

According to the rules of rhetoric, the audience must be left at the end in a positive frame of mind, both toward the author and toward the heroes of the story. This seems to be the case:

Then, according to the word sent by King Darius, Tattenai, the governor of the province Beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and their associates did with all diligence what King Darius had ordered. The elders of the Jews built and prospered, through the prophesying of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. They finished their building by command of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, King of Persia; and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. The people of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. (Ezra 6:13–16)

The epilogue continues for the remainder of chap. 6 in this same joyous spirit. The reader can now relax and rejoice with the Jews in the dedication of their temple and in the celebration of the Passover that follows (6:19–22).

Conclusions

These results permit the conclusion that the author of Ezra 1–6 was complying with the demands of Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography when he created his text. Ezra 1–3 forms the prologue, Ezra 4:1–6:15 forms the body of the text, and Ezra 6:16–22 forms the epilogue. The prologue sets the stage, introduces the characters and the author, and attempts to convince the reader of the author's knowledge of his subject, of his and his heroes' high moral qualities, and of their good will toward the implied reader. The list of temple vessels and the list of returnees were included in the prologue to convince the reader of the

author's knowledge of his subject and his access to the archives. This is essential in view of the fact that the body of argument depends for its proofs on archival information. The prologue's story about the haste and diligence of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the returnees in obeying both the laws of Moses and of Cyrus is included to persuade the reader of the good will of both the author and the returnees. The epilogue also conforms to Hellenistic rules of rhetoric by attempting to leave the reader in a positive frame of mind.

The narrative and proofs contained in Ezra 4:1–6:15 also exhibit Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography in which a narrative is presented and proofs brought. The narrative accuses *ʿam hāʾareṣ* of being the enemies of the Jews. They are accused of writing letters to the Persian king to convince him to prevent the temple from being built. The proof offered is the correspondence between *ʿam hāʾareṣ* and Artaxerxes in which *ʿam hāʾareṣ* try to convince the king to stop Jerusalem's city wall from being built. Bringing in this correspondence conforms to Aristotle's advice that, if no direct proof of a malfeasance is available, then one must prove that it is the sort of thing the man is in the habit of doing. That is what the letters to Xerxes and Artaxerxes do. They show that *ʿam hāʾareṣ* are the sort of people in the habit of writing accusing letters to the king and the sort that *would* out of revenge and spite malign the Jews and attempt to prevent their temple from being completed. Examining these chapters through the lens of early Hellenistic rules of rhetorical historiography allows us to unravel the text, and to explain the reason behind the component parts. The purpose of Ezra 1–6 is evidently to persuade the reader that *ʿam hāʾareṣ* are the enemies of the Jews. The next facet of study is to ask why the writer was so intent on convincing his readers of this. That is the subject of another paper.

What Was Nehemiah Up To? Looking for Models for Nehemiah's Polity

LESTER L. GRABBE

In the history of research on Nehemiah, a number of writers have suggested parallels to his actions. For example, E. M. Yamauchi and H. Kippenberg put forward the reformer of ancient Athens, Solon, who intervened over the plight of the poor in their complaint against the aristocracy.¹ On the other hand, another Athenian reformer, Pericles, was preferred by Morton Smith and Joseph Blenkinsopp.² Pericles' main action comparable to Nehemiah's was in the area of marriage to aliens.

This raises several questions: Are the Greek models helpful? Would it be better to look closer to home, to the ancient Near East? Do these models tell us anything, anyway? In investigating these questions, I shall work on the principle that in literature we can always talk about parallels, models, influences, and the like, because authors are influenced by their knowledge, culture, environment, and proclivities. Even when the story is a historical one, the way it is written can owe much to borrowings or (conscious or unconscious) models. In the case of Nehemiah, I happen to believe—in common with probably the majority of scholars—that a genuine writing of Nehemiah has been incorporated into the book of Nehemiah. But Nehemiah himself wrote under the duress of major prejudices and points of view that others around him did not

1. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Two Reformers Compared: Solon of Athens and Nehemiah of Jerusalem," in *The Bible World: Essays in Honor of Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. Gary Rendsburg et al.; New York: Ktav, 1980) 269–92; Hans G. Kippenberg, *Religion und Klassenbildung im antiken Judäa* (2nd ed.; SUNT 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982) 55–62.

2. Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1971) 108; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," in *Studies in the Second Temple*: vol. 1: *The Persian Period* (ed. Philip R. Davies; JSOTSup 117; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991) 22–53, esp. p. 29.

share and that we also need not share.³ These personal views—models, if you will—have influenced the presentation of Nehemiah’s story.

The Main Points of the Nehemiah Story

What we have in the book of Nehemiah is by and large Nehemiah’s own assessment of himself plus what an admirer passed on to later generations in the present book. Nehemiah portrayed himself as a courageous reformer who championed the poor and oppressed and who was zealous in enforcing the law of God in the province. Where he presents himself in particular as a reformer (or at least is seen by moderns as a reformer) is especially in the two areas of his economic measures (Nehemiah 5) and his religious reforms relating to the intermarriage with “foreigners” and to keeping the sabbath (Neh 13:15–27). The main points in the Nehemiah story can be summarized as follows:

1. He is concerned about the state of things in Judah and Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1).
2. He receives permission from the king to journey to Jerusalem and sort matters out (2:1–8), apparently with the office of governor (5:14).
3. He makes the journey with an escort and letters permitting him to pass through and also to take timber from the king’s park for his building project (2:7–9).
4. He is opposed by a coalition of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gershem (2:10, 19–20).
5. After surveying the damage (2:11–16), he effects the repair of the wall by harnessing most of the resources of the province on a temporary basis (Nehemiah 3–4).
6. “The people” come to him and complain about their plight because of poverty, taxation, and enslavement of their children. He compels the creditors to cancel their debts (5:1–13).
7. He has Tobiah’s things removed from a room in the temple (13:4–9).
8. He restores the fortunes of the Levites (13:10–13).
9. He makes Jerusalem and the merchants who do business there observe the Sabbath (13:15–22).

3. Cf. my *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004) 308–10.

10. He opposes intermarriage of Jews with non-Jews and even drives out the son of Jaddua the high priest who has married a daughter of Sanballat (13:28–29).

Alleged Parallels from Greece

E. Yamauchi points to the reforms of Solon as having many parallels to the reforms of Nehemiah.⁴ This is an interesting comparison and needs further investigation. First, a brief overview of Solon's reforms is necessary. There are many historical problems with determining precisely what the crisis was and exactly how Solon addressed it.⁵ All that can be done in the brief space here is provide a reasonable overview based on recent discussion. The issue seems to have been partly a class-based one, with conflict between the old aristocracy and the mass of the people, but in reality it was apparently much more complex than that.

Two groups of poor seem to have been in difficulties, the *peletai* (apparently those who earned their living by working for others) and the *hectomoroi* ("one-sixthers," who were bound to pay one-sixth of their crops and produce to the aristocracy). The payment of one-sixth seems fairly generous, because share croppers usually have to turn over a much larger percentage of the harvest (both in antiquity and modern times), but the issue may have been one of ambiguity about who actually owned the land, in which case Solon's laws put it in the hands of those working it.⁶ As for the *peletai*, many of them had borrowed on credit, with their bodies as security. If they defaulted on the loan, they could be sold into slavery, even abroad. In addition, party-political concerns were apparently a major issue, because much of the political power had previously

4. Yamauchi, "Two Reformers Compared: Solon of Athens and Nehemiah of Jerusalem." Yamauchi found that earlier researchers had not noticed this (p. 269), though he does acknowledge that Morton Smith had referred to Solon in a 1971 publication: *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament*, 126.

5. A useful overview can be found in A. Andrewes, "The Growth of the Athenian State," in *CAH* 3.3:36–91, esp. pp. 375–91; see also Terry Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC: A Source-Based Approach* (London: Routledge, 1996). On trying to reconstruct Solon's own writings, see Eberhard Ruschenbusch, *ΣΟΛΩΝΟΣ ΝΟΜΟΙ: Die Fragmente des solonischen Gesetzeswerkes mit einer Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte* (Historia-Einzelschriften 9; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1966).

6. Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC: A Source-Based Approach*, 90–91.

been in the hands of a few wealthy aristocrats. In this area, Solon was hardly a modern democrat. He divided the free Greeks into four classes, based on wealth. The filling of high office could come only from the top three classes. The bottom class, the *thetes*, were allowed only to vote in the “popular assembly” (*ekklēsia*), but this was an improvement.

Possibly the most important of Solon’s reforms had to do with long-term economic development. Simply cancelling debt would not necessarily help the poor; indeed, it would have made it even harder for them initially, because creditors would have been reluctant to make loans in the aftermath of the reforms.⁷ Of foodstuffs, he allowed only olive oil to be exported, which caused the development of the oil industry. He encouraged people to enter the trades by offering citizenship to foreign craftsmen who committed to settle permanently and by not requiring a craftsman to support his father if the latter had not taught him his trade. All of this encouraged the development of a different economy, one that was not solely agricultural but that included manufacturing and encouraged investment in overseas trade. It was now possible for the Greek mainland to support a larger population than was possible from agriculture alone.

Thus, Solon’s reforms included not just social reform but political, legal, and economic reform. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Cancellation of debts and enslavement for debt, including buying back some who had been sold abroad.
2. Establishment of land ownership by the farmers by removing the marker-stones.
3. Political reform that gave more power to the wealthy outside the narrow band of the aristocrats who had previously kept power in their hands.
4. Legal reform that replaced many of the harsh measures of Draco, allowed any citizen to bring a suit (not just the wronged

7. I pointed this out in 1998 (*Ezra and Nehemiah* [Readings; London: Routledge, 1998] 173–74) without being aware of the detail of Solon’s reforms. It therefore gave some satisfaction to read the following comment by Buckley (*Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC: A Source-Based Approach*, 101):

those who had been previously forced through poverty to become debt-bondsmen still faced the same difficulties of trying to make an adequate living for themselves and their families. Such men now found it harder to borrow, since they could no longer offer their own persons as reliable security for their debt and because creditors were wary about lending, having already suffered under one cancellation of debts.

party), and permitted any citizen who thought he was maltreated by a magistrate to appeal to the People's Court.

5. Economic reform that encouraged the development of manufacturing and investment in overseas trade.

As will be obvious, there is an interesting parallel to Nehemiah in point 1, but otherwise Nehemiah did not carry out full-blown economic or political reform. Solon therefore does not serve as much of a model for Nehemiah, because most of his reforms went far beyond anything that the text suggests Nehemiah did.

Another comparison is that of Pericles.⁸ Here, the parallel is quite different: Pericles's reforms have little in common with Solon's. Pericles did not carry out the wide-ranging legal, social, economic, and political reforms that his predecessor had done. He was a supporter of the more radical democratic party, a pro-Spartan, and a general. He allied with Ephialtes in reducing the power of the aristocratic Areopagus and transferring most of its political powers to the more democratic institutions, especially those that related to accountability of those who held public office. He has been credited with introducing pay for jury service and service in some of the other institutions. However, this increased participation brought financial costs, and Pericles felt the need to reduce the number of citizens who might benefit.⁹ It was this that led to his citizenship law of 451 decreeing that only one whose mother and father were both citizens could be a citizen. Nehemiah's breaking up of marriages in which a Jew had a non-Jewish wife might seem parallel, but it is a minor parallel at most. Because Pericles did not forbid marriage or attempt to break up unions, there is little resemblance to Nehemiah.

Biblical Parallels

The question of what models might be followed in Nehemiah's story should begin with the most obvious, which are those elsewhere in the

8. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah," 29; Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics*: 108. On Pericles' reforms, see P. J. Rhodes, "The Athenian Revolution," *CAH* 5.62-95, esp. pp. 77-87; Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History*, 241-51.

9. This is one explanation but is probably also a simplistic one. One factor seems to be the number of individuals coming from abroad and settling in Athens at this time. If they married an Athenian, as many did, their children would be citizens. It is clear that there was a feeling against allowing the ranks of citizens to expand in such a way at this time, though precisely what arguments were used is not clear from the extant sources.

biblical writings. The two that immediately come to mind are Hezekiah and Josiah. It is clear that the detailed activities of these kings do not match those of Nehemiah. They do not repair walls or relieve the people of debts. Their main parallel to Nehemiah lies in the cultic reforms. Hezekiah and Josiah are said to have removed certain forms of worship that the authors of the texts regarded as illegitimate, just as Nehemiah enforced the sabbath, attacked mixed marriages, and prevented an individual from access to the temple.

One general point made in various passages is the responsibility of all pious individuals to provide assistance to the poor and downtrodden, to the “widow and orphan” (Exod 22:20–23; Deut 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19–21; 26:12–13; 27:19; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Zech 7:10). As Isa 1:17 puts it, “learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow” (NRSV). This was always the religious ideal. Nehemiah was well aware of this tradition and would have seen himself as helping the oppressed in a time-honored manner.

Parallels from the Ancient Near East

Within the wider ancient Near East, Nehemiah’s reforms to assist the poor and indebted are not far removed from the ideal of the good king. There was a widespread view about certain characteristics that the king should possess and exercise, attested across a number of cultures and periods. The king’s officials or representatives were also expected to exhibit the same characteristics.

Mesopotamia

In the prologue to the *Code of Hammurabi*, the Babylonian king states what would have been the ideal of the kingship duties as understood in the region for millennia:

at that time Anum and Enlil named me
to promote the welfare of the people,
me, Hammurabi, the devout, god-fearing prince,
to cause justice to prevail in the land,
to destroy the wicked and the evil,
that the strong might not oppress the weak,
to rise like the sun over the black-haired (people),
and to light up the land.¹⁰

In the Ugaritic texts King Danil (sometimes spelled Daniel) is presented as the ideal king, as pictured in the *Epic of Aqhat* (5.3–8):

10. ANET 164.

And behold! on the seventh day,
 thereupon Daniel, man of Rapiu,
 thereat the hero, man of He-of-Harnam,
 raised himself up (and) sat at the entrance of the gate
 beneath the trees which were by the threshing-floor;
 he judged the cause of the widow,
 tried the case of the orphan.¹¹

Similarly, King Keret, after recovering from grave illness, sits on his throne; however, he is admonished by his son for his neglect of his kingly duties (*Keret* 6.43–50; cf. 6.30–34):

While bandits raid you turn (your) back,
 and you entertain feuding rivalries.
 You have been brought down by your failing power.
 You do not judge the cause of the widow,
 you do not try the case of the importunate.
 You do not banish the extortioners of the poor,
 you do not feed the orphan before your face
 (nor) the widow behind your back.¹²

Egypt

C. B. Welles¹³ drew attention to the Egyptian tradition of giving sage advice to the king or a high government official. This tradition is clear in the variety of instructions found in Egyptian wisdom literature, but what Welles has shown is its persistence over many millennia, even down to the Greek period. He notes, for example, the resemblances between the tomb inscription of the Vizier Rekhmire who served under Thutmose III (c. 1450 B.C.E.)¹⁴ and the well-known Ptolemaic text of P. Tebtunis 703.¹⁵ Here are some of the parallels he pointed out:

11. *KTU* 1.17 V:3–8. For text and translation, see J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978) 107.

12. *KTU* 1.16 VI:43–50; VI:27–34; for text and translation, see Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*: 101, 102.

13. C. Bradford Welles, "The Ptolemaic Administration in Egypt", *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 3 (1949) 21–47.

14. The installation ceremony is translated by Miriam Lichtheim in *AEL* II, 21–24. The description of the vizier's duties, which are the contents of interest here, can be found in the older translation of James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest, Edited and Translated with Commentary* (5 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906–7; repr., London: Histories and Mysteries of Man, 1988). 2.270–81 (§§671–711).

15. Published in *The Tebtunis Papyri, Volume III, Part I* (ed. Arthur S. Hunt and J. Gilbert Smyly; University of California Publications, Graeco-Roman Ar-

- Rekhmire §§698, 707//P.Teb. 29–40: concern for the water supply
- Rekhmire §709//P. Teb. 70–87, 211–14: the movement of royal messengers and commodities
- Rekhmire §§686–90, 699, 703//P. Teb. 49–60: crop production, with the king's portion collected, all in accord with the land registry and the sowing schedule
- Rekhmire §697//P. Teb. 191–211: trees and timber supply
- Rekhmire §706//P. Teb. 183–91: cattle production
- Rekhmire §§753–59//P. Teb. 87–117, 134–64, 174–82: arts and crafts, including textiles, oil, and markets
- Rekhmire §666//P. Teb. 273–74: avoid bad company
- Rekhmire §715//P. Teb. 42–43, 60–63: promote cheerfulness
- Rekhmire §§669, 713//P. Teb. 222–25: promote and carry out justice

Some of these relate to general administrative concerns, but overall they involve the concerns and care of the conscientious administrator who has Egypt and the welfare of her people at heart. This is a tradition that is likely to have had parallels in Israel and Judah and even to have influenced her thinking to some extent.

Welles also cited the example of the *Instructions of Merikare* (*AEL* 1.97–109), though similar sorts of instructions are found in Kagemni (*AEL* 1.59–61) and Ptah-hotep (*AEL* 1.61–80). For example, Ptah-hotep §17 commends listening to the petition of an inferior. The persistence of the tradition is indicated by an examination of a Ptolemaic papyrus from about 164 B.C.E. where a similar idea is found.¹⁶ Finally, there is the case of Horemheb, the first Pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty (c. 1325 B.C.E.), who claims to have ended oppression in Egypt with particular decrees.¹⁷ His statements can be compared with some of those enacted by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II in his amnesty decree of 118 B.C.E., as recorded in *P. Tebtunis* 5.¹⁸

Conclusions

Models serve a variety of purposes. If the story of Nehemiah had been invented, finding a model might provide a clue to the way it was

chaeology 3; London: Humphrey Milford, 1933) 66–102.

16. Ulrich Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit, ältere Funde* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1922–57) #110, lines 60–62, 74–78.

17. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 3.22–33 (§§45–67).

18. Published in *The Tebtunis Papyri, Part I* (ed. Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt, and J. Gilbert Smyly; University of California Publications, Graeco-Roman Archaeology 1; London: Henry Frowde, 1902) 17–58.

constructed by the author. In the case of Nehemiah, I would argue that his story tells about actual events.¹⁹ If so, what is the function of looking for models? It is not clear, for example, what Yamauchi's aim is in his detailed comparison of Nehemiah and Solon. On the other hand, one possible aim of comparison is to show that even though the events took place, they may have been colored or structured by parallels known from other contexts.

Cross-cultural parallels have a different function. They do not provide evidence of origins. They may be more similar or less similar, but their function is to furnish analogies that aid understanding of the originals. They allow the researcher to interrogate the data and perhaps learn new things by showing what is possible. The models prove nothing by themselves but only serve to illuminate their counterparts. In that case, finding a parallel is not significant of and by itself; it does not show that a particular account is true. It has value only as it helps us to grasp the account in question.

It must be admitted that in some cases models seem to be invoked to demonstrate the reality of the original story. The reasoning seems to be that if something similar happened elsewhere in an account widely believed to reflect reality, the original story must be true. Granted that parallel accounts believed to be real might lend greater plausibility to the account being considered, the closeness of the parallels is an important consideration in such cases. The question then becomes how close is the case of Solon or Pericles to that of Nehemiah? If there are seemingly striking parallels, is this because the author has (consciously or unconsciously) structured his account to generate these parallels? Or is it that Nehemiah himself has (consciously or unconsciously) followed models such as these in his own actions, or at least in his account of his actions?

Only one aspect of Solon's reforms is reflected in Nehemiah's actions, that of relieving certain individuals from the threat or actual condition of servitude because of debt. Nehemiah thus helped some individuals, but he did little or nothing for the long-term well-being of the people. Solon was hardly a model for Nehemiah; on the contrary, Nehemiah's rulings possibly only made things worse in the long run, whereas Solon's reforms set Greece on a path to future development and recovery, whatever temporary hardships they might have caused. The comparison with the reforms of Pericles—which seem to have little in common with Solon's—look rather ill fitting. Pericles enacted a law that limited Athenian citizenship to the offspring of both a citizen father

19. Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism*, 294–95.

and a citizen mother. He did not forbid marriage or attempt to break up unions; in this his actions were very different from Nehemiah's.

On the other hand, Nehemiah seems to be following views that were widespread in the ancient Near East about the righteous king or the righteous official. Evidence for this can be found in a variety of sources (a sample of which are given above), including the Hebrew Bible. Rather than following Greek models, Nehemiah or the writer of his story were probably influenced by ideal types (models) well known from the ancient Near East. However, the Greek examples provide some interesting cross-cultural comparisons that might help us to understand better the Nehemiah story by generating new questions about it. That is an exercise that is beyond the scope of this essay but one that should be followed up.

***Nehemiah:
Subject of the Empire,
Subject of Writing***

DON POLASKI

All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job [subdivisional police officer] impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

—George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"¹

Like George Orwell, Nehemiah was a colonial official trying to do a job. Nehemiah may not have shared the kind of empathetic loathing for the Yehudites that Orwell expresses toward the Burmese, though Nehemiah was certainly capable of brutality (13:23–25). But the parallel with Orwell nonetheless proves informative. Orwell's position in the colonizing project produced an uncertain and shifting subject, a person unsure of his own relationship to imperial authorities and the colonized. If Orwell's position produced such a fractured subject, we should expect Nehemiah's more complex set of relationships to yield

Author's note: I presented an earlier version of this essay in the Chronicles-Ezra-Nehemiah Section at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. My thanks go to Professor Isaac Kalimi for asking me to submit this work to this volume as well as for his editorial advice.

1. George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," from *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950) 4.

a fractured subject as well.² After all, Nehemiah was in some sense one of the colonized, a Yehudite, as well as one of the colonizers, a Persian official. Nehemiah was a subject in process, a figure trying to find the right pose. As we read the Nehemiah Memoir (NM), we are privy to Nehemiah's negotiation of his place between empire and colony.³ And as we read Ezra–Nehemiah, we see a later redactor redefining Nehemiah's place.⁴

I wish to examine one aspect of Nehemiah's relation to empire and colony, his use of writing. Tamara Eskenazi has pointed to the ways written works function literarily in Ezra–Nehemiah: "Ezra–Nehemiah is a book of documents. These documents function as an important structural device. They demonstrate the power and propriety of documents as causative principles and significant forces in human events."⁵ This use of writing is, however, not only a literary device. When the authors of Ezra–Nehemiah describe documents as appropriate means of power, they align themselves with the Achaemenid Empire's use of written texts to project and maintain imperial power.⁶

2. As Albert Memmi puts it: "a man straddling two cultures is rarely well seated, and the colonized does not always find the right pose" (*The Colonizer and the Colonized* [New York: Orion, 1965] 124, cited in Jon L. Berquist, "Post-colonialism and Imperial Motives for Canonization," *Semeia* 75 [1996] 31). In this essay, I assume that Nehemiah was indeed "a man straddling two cultures." But even if Nehemiah is more a literary construct than an actual person, he still represents an instance of colonial cultural negotiation.

3. For the purposes of this essay, I will follow David Clines's delimitation of the NM: "Only the hyper-critical will disallow that in 1.1–7.7 (minus perhaps ch. 3), 12.31–43 and 13.4–31 at least we hear the *ipsissima vox* of Nehemiah" ("The Nehemiah Memoir: The Perils of Autobiography," in *What Does Eve Do to Help? and Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990] 124). Some scholars go further and speculate on the chronological development of the NM. For this sort of analysis, see Jacob L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (BZAW 348; New York: de Gruyter, 2004). For a brief summary of the question, see Mark J. Boda, "Redaction in the Book of Nehemiah: A Fresh Proposal," in *Unity and Disunity in Extra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader* (ed. M. J. Boda and P. L. Redditt; Hebrew Bible Monographs 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008) 25–26 n. 2.

4. For an analysis of Nehemiah as a character in Ezra–Nehemiah, see Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra–Nehemiah* (SBLMS 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 144–52.

5. *Ibid.*, 41.

6. On Achaemenid civil administration, including its use of texts, see Muhammad A. Dandamaev and Vladimir G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Social Insti-*

But does Nehemiah, one of the authors of Ezra–Nehemiah, align himself in this way? If the NM is a form of imperial discourse, it is an odd form. The NM is shot through with odd gaps and extreme claims. For example, what was the empire supposed to make of Nehemiah's frequent invocations of the deity? Just who is the audience here, YHWH or Artaxerxes? I believe that the NM's various peculiarities reflect Nehemiah's self-fashioning in his colonial setting. Since the empire projects its power in and through writing, Nehemiah has to work out his identity in league with and over against authoritative textuality. In short, I claim that, in writing the NM, Nehemiah makes himself the subject of writing while attempting to avoid being made subject to writing. My reading of the NM that follows examines the ways authoritative writing and colonial subjectivity collide.

Nehemiah Introduces Himself

The Meeting with the Party from Jerusalem

The NM begins with a brief interview between Nehemiah and a traveling party, who describe Jerusalem's dire state. This episode is vital; the whole narrative of the memoir springs from Nehemiah's reaction to this new and shocking information. However, this story seems historically implausible. The information appears to surprise Nehemiah; it results in a sudden prayer for the city and its welfare. But we know that the Diaspora and Yehud communicated, often through letters.⁷ We should expect Nehemiah, who by his own admission is curious about Jerusalem (1:2), to have knowledge of events there. Even if we assume that the destruction of Jerusalem's walls and gates was recent, it is hard to imagine word of this not reaching court by post before a delegation from Yehud reached Susa on foot.⁸

The placement of this story directly after the book of Ezra highlights the lack of communication here. Ezra is all about the vitality of letter

tutions of Ancient Iran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 96–116. For more on the possible relationships between Persian authority and the law of the Yehudites, see the essays in *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (ed. J. Watts; SBLSymS 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

7. E.g., Jeremiah 29; and texts from Elephantine, *TADAE* A 4.7, 4.9.

8. H. G. M. Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah* [WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] 172) associates the dire state of Jerusalem here with a destruction supposedly intimated in Ezra 4:23. He does not explain why Nehemiah either is ignorant or plays ignorant regarding the situation.

writing in imperial affairs. Letters flow from Susa to Yehud, carrying information on all manner of events, especially those involving the state of Jerusalem. But now, in Nehemiah 1, the mail no longer comes. This shift shows that Nehemiah is telling a story that relies on oral, not written, communication at its start. Nehemiah begins his story in a powerfully oral way, despite the role of texts in imperial government expected by both modern historians and the redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah.

Nehemiah's Prayer

Nehemiah's oral performance continues with his reaction to the report from Jerusalem: a prayer.⁹ This prayer could hardly be what Nehemiah prayed over and over again in the months between his discussion with Hanani and his audience with Artaxerxes. Rather, it is a literary construct designed by Nehemiah to reveal his character in the best possible light.¹⁰ For our purposes, it also shows Nehemiah establishing a stance toward the empire and toward the people of Yehud, directly before his attempt to secure imperial support for the restoration of Jerusalem (and before we learn that Nehemiah is, indeed, an official at court [1:11]).

In this prayer, Nehemiah deals with the people of Yehud by identifying himself with them; they are all servants of YHWH¹¹:

Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. (1:6, and see 1:11)¹²

Nehemiah then identifies himself with Moses, twice called a “servant” by Nehemiah (1:7, 8). So Nehemiah carefully positions himself as a

9. On the question of the prayer's place in the NM, see Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah: A Commentary* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988] 208), who claims that this prayer is a later insertion, and Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 166–68), who defends the prayer's authenticity.

10. Clines, “Perils,” 129–30.

11. Klaus Baltzer (“Moses, Servant of God and the Servants: Text and Tradition in the Prayer of Nehemiah [Neh 1:5–11],” in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* [ed. Birger A. Pearson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991] 123) claims that “his ‘orthodoxy’ as an Israelite is also made clear” by use of YHWH, which appears in the NM only here and in 5:13.

12. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the Hebrew Bible in this essay come from the NRSV.

member of the people and as a faithful exponent of their national tradition.¹³

Nehemiah also identifies himself with Moses' words; he seems to be depending on Deuteronomy for his language here. Neh 1:5 recalls Deut 7:9 and 7:21, while Neh 1:9 parallels Deut 30:4 and 12:5. Some scholars here see Nehemiah citing the words of a written text, hence Rodney Werline's claim that "the author [of the prayer] has Deut 7:9 in mind," while Wilhelm Rudolph speaks of "free citations" in the prayer.¹⁴

But it is impossible to prove whether Nehemiah had a version of Deuteronomy in front of him as he composed this prayer. At most, we can say that he, like other authors of psalms in the period, saturated his psalm with language also found in the Torah.¹⁵ Of course, if Nehemiah were citing a written source, he could easily have let his readers know.¹⁶ But Nehemiah, ensconced in an oral universe of his own design and emphasis, opts not to address the Torah's possible status as a writing but uses the language of Torah orally to cement (or claim) a relationship to the Yehudites.

While developing Nehemiah's Yehudite bona fides, the prayer also further develops Nehemiah's nuanced relationship with the empire. We have seen that Nehemiah distances himself from written expressions that may involve the empire's power.¹⁷ Imperial correspondence is oddly absent from the story; the Torah, at least conceivably an imperial document, is left uncited as a writing. But this does not make Nehemiah a revolutionary. In his use of deuteronomic thought, Nehemiah emphasizes a view of Israel and its history that works to create a colonial

13. Baltzer asserts that "Nehemiah assumes the authority of Moses" (ibid., 128) and identifies with a "distinct ethnos within the Persian Empire" (ibid., 125).

14. Rodney A. Werline, *Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism: The Development of a Religious Institution* (SBLJL 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) 54; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia* (HAT 20; Tübingen: Mohr, 1949) 105.

15. On this issue, see Judith H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

16. Nehemiah himself uses the citational formula כְּתוּב בָּהּ in reference to a letter (6:6), while the redactor includes direct citations of the "law of Moses" using the formula 36]37, [34]:3510 [כְּכַתוּב]; cf. 13:1)

17. Gary Knoppers ("An Achaemenid Imperial Authorization of Torah in Yehud?" in *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* [ed. J. Watts; SBLSymS 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001] 115–34, quoting p. 132) notes that "it is exceedingly rare for Nehemiah to cite Persian imperial sanction as the basis for any of the policies he implements."

subject. The people's subject status is the deserved result of their sins.¹⁸ Nehemiah speaks, using standard deuteronomic language, of a return of Yehudites to Jerusalem, but claims no end to the empire. In a real sense the Yehudites need an imperial power (and Nehemiah) to "gather them from there and bring them to the place at which God has chosen to establish his name" (1:9).

As if to underline this point, Nehemiah, in the process of securing the success he asks of God, identifies himself as a "servant" of Artaxerxes (2:5). In so doing, Nehemiah joins the king, YHWH, the Yehudites, and himself into one discourse, an economy of servanthood that defines the people (and Nehemiah) in relation to both their national god, YHWH, and their emperor, Artaxerxes. But, throughout this move, Nehemiah avoids explicit mention of writing.

The Interview with Artaxerxes

Nehemiah continues to avoid written texts in his account of his interview with Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes seems to know that Nehemiah is speaking of Jerusalem and evinces no shock concerning its condition. But Nehemiah does not dwell on how the king would know this; Nehemiah is uninterested in elaborating on the efficiency of the empire's intelligence system.

Nor does Nehemiah describe Artaxerxes' making any search of the archives for corroborating documentation. This sharply contrasts with the steps taken by Darius' administration in Ezra 5–6 when it was faced with a request to aid Jerusalem. And it sits uncomfortably with Ezra 4's claim that Artaxerxes himself issued written orders halting reconstruction efforts in Jerusalem.¹⁹ Ezra and Nehemiah thus have differing Ar-

18. Berquist ("Postcolonialism," 22):

If this nascent canon operated as Persian imperial ideology, the implications are clear. Israel and Judah lost their land by their own deeds, their own God removed them from the land and placed them under care of another, and now the other (about whom the historical texts are silent) rightfully rules. The prophets are even clearer about this ideological assertion that the Yehudites deserve the loss of land, even though a "remnant" will attain a modicum of control and power. Especially in texts such as Deutero-Isaiah, the Persian imperializing ideology is unmistakable: Cyrus is the messiah, the anointed one with God-given authority to rule Yehud (Isa 44:24–45:8). This theological justification for political reality depicts Yehud as colony. The texts legitimate, authorize, and perpetuate the ideology of the colonized.

19. Richard C. Steiner ("Bishlam's Archival Search Report in Nehemiah's Archive: Multiple Introductions and Reverse Chronological Order as Clues to the Origin of the Aramaic Letters in Ezra 4–6," *JBL* 125 [2006] 657–61) asserts

taxerxes: while the Artaxerxes of Ezra is a monarch who uses writing in a powerful way, Nehemiah's Artaxerxes has a slim connection to the imperial bureaucracy and its scribal apparatus. In the NM, Artaxerxes will rely on Nehemiah's persuasive speech for vital information, not on reports from satraps or archived orders.

It is, in fact, Nehemiah who introduces the subject of writing, controlling its entry into his story. Nehemiah requests letters from Artaxerxes:

"If it pleases the king, let letters (אַגְרוֹת) be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may grant me passage until I arrive in Judah; and a letter (אַגְרָת) to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, directing him to give me timber to make beams for the gates of the temple fortress, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the gracious hand of my God was upon me. (2:7–8)

Letters are obviously powerful. Nehemiah associates both the king and God with them. Artaxerxes grants them, and they function alongside other examples of imperial power: "Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters (אַגְרוֹת). Now the king had sent officers of the army and cavalry with me" (2:9). But for Nehemiah they also provide evidence that God's hand—a symbol of divine power—is with him.

Nehemiah Comes to Yehud: The Case of the Missing אַגְרוֹת

But Nehemiah introduces these authoritative texts into his narrative only to make them vanish. Nehemiah gives the letters to the provincial authorities and, immediately afterward, he informs us that Sanballat and Tobiah have heard of his plans (2:10). But Nehemiah (for whatever reason) wishes to keep his mission a secret from the Yehudites, so he drops the letters, reasonably enough, from his account of his initial survey of Jerusalem.²⁰ If he does not wish to provide oral or visual in-

that an archival search was made, perhaps with Nehemiah's support, resulting in the confusing collection of four letters in Ezra 4:8–6:12. Largely on the basis of 2 Macc 2:13, Steiner claims that these letters became part of Nehemiah's own provincial archive. Whatever the merit of Steiner's reconstruction, it is clear that Nehemiah himself makes no reference either to archival searches or archived documents.

20. Lisbeth S. Fried (*The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire*, Biblical and Judaic Studies 10 [BJSUCSD 10; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004] 201–3) suspects Nehemiah was attempting to hide his plans from the priests, nobles, and officials, who as local bureaucrats were interested in maintaining and extending their own power positions, just as Sanballat,

formation about his reasons for being in the area (2:12, 16), he certainly would not wish to present letters from the emperor.

But, most curiously, Nehemiah, in his account, *never* uses the letters in Yehud. The official authorizing documents have no place in Nehemiah's account of his persuasive speech to the Yehudites. Instead of transmitting written communication, Nehemiah relates the content of the conversation with the king, or to be perfectly literal, only the words the king spoke (2:18). We may assume these words express Artaxerxes' support of Nehemiah and his program, but Nehemiah does not see fit to quote any official documents in his account.

The only intimation of the missing letters comes in Nehemiah's report that "the hand of my God has been gracious upon me" (2:18; אֶת־יְדִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה עָלַי). This phrase echoes Nehemiah's reaction to Artaxerxes' granting of the letters: "the gracious hand of my God was upon me" (2:8; כִּי־יְדִי אֱלֹהֵי הַטּוֹבָה עָלַי).²¹ The echo here illuminates a shift in Nehemiah's viewpoint. Where Nehemiah once has God express his gracious power through imperial documents, now Nehemiah expresses that power as demonstrated in his successful (but here unnarrated) audience with Artaxerxes.

It makes sense to read Nehemiah's erasure of the letters along with his erasure of his own official role. Nehemiah will wait until chap. 5 to claim the office that he obviously already holds.²² It is difficult to imagine a body of workers following Nehemiah's plan without his holding some authority, but Nehemiah does not mention having claimed any

Tobiah, and Geshem were. If Fried is correct that Nehemiah "feared" these men (p. 202), then he covers the effects of this possible opposition quite effectively: he claims he presented his plans to them almost immediately and they accepted it with alacrity (2:17). The nobles and officials present no difficulty until 5:7.

21. In 2:18, Nehemiah again has YHWH and Artaxerxes working in concert: "I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me." Pace Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 191): "Nehemiah's correct perspective is seen here again as he points first to God's favor as the cause for their change in fortune (cf. 2:8 and Ezra 7:6), and only secondly to the king as God's instrument."

22. On the question of the beginning of Nehemiah's governorship, see Clines, "Perils," 157–60. Eskenazi (*Age*, 149–50) claims that the narrator of Ezra–Nehemiah creates dissonance by withholding information, dissonance that makes the reader suspicious of Nehemiah: "The reader, surprised that Nehemiah had been appointed governor, wonders whether Artaxerxes himself would also be similarly surprised." In my view, Nehemiah's withholding information as narrator of NM reflects his negotiation of his identity regarding empire and colony.

such role. According to Nehemiah, speaking with the king and receiving some “words” from him are enough. And Nehemiah will not speak of any Yehudite being the least bit curious about his credentials. Instead, Nehemiah gives us a picture of enthusiastic, immediate, voluntary participation: “Then they said, ‘Let us start building!’ So they committed themselves to the common good” (2:18).

The absence of the letters seems to be part of Nehemiah’s larger concern to diminish the traces of imperial power in his story. Nehemiah mentions the letters only in the imperial context of court and governors. In Yehud, Nehemiah does not rely on such props. Perhaps this is Nehemiah’s own way of keeping the attention focused on himself.²³ But the oral focus of his self-introduction as well as the vanishing letters may indicate caginess regarding the exercise of power through him and by him, a negotiation of a person caught between being a colonizer and being colonized.

Hearing Is Believing: Nehemiah and the Oral World of Palestine

The First Conflict

Nehemiah continues privileging the oral while making strategic use of the written throughout his story. This is quite clear in Nehemiah’s reports of his relationship to his adversaries. They have already heard (2:10) of Nehemiah’s seemingly secret mission; they hear again when Nehemiah begins to put his plan into motion:

But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab heard, they mocked and held us in contempt. They said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” But I replied to them and said to them, “The God of heaven, he will grant us success; we his servants will begin building.” (2:19–20a, my translation)

Nehemiah gives this interchange an oral feel; it sounds like a direct confrontation. But it makes little historical sense to imagine Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem making the journey to Jerusalem for a brief bit of entertaining mockery.²⁴ It would make better sense for this to be an

23. Eskenazi (ibid., 151) remarks on Nehemiah’s “emphasis on himself” and “self-adulation.”

24. Cf. Clines’s treatment of a similar taunting episode: 3:33–37 (“Perils,” 138–39, 155–56).

exchange of written threats, but Nehemiah does not represent matters that way, leading to this oddly staged “conversation.”

In his response to these supposed adversaries, Nehemiah first parries the accusation of rebellion against the king with a theological claim: God will grant success to his servants. Here, Nehemiah assumes, as he has before, that God and king work together in the economy of servanthood. So Nehemiah replies to his opponents by unveiling his status as subject of God and king. Those who follow the plan of Artaxerxes, YHWH, and Nehemiah are the true servants of God and king. Those who oppose it are no real subjects of God and king.²⁵ Nehemiah emphasizes this status by calling Tobiah, his only opponent with a Yahwistic name, the “servant, the Ammonite” (2:19; cf. 2:10), locating him as a servant of something other than God or king.²⁶

Nehemiah then denies his opponents a “memorial” in Jerusalem: “But you [Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem] have no share or claim or memorial [זְכוֹרֹן] in Jerusalem” (2:20b). The term זְכוֹרֹן may refer to any object that serves to remind its viewer (e.g., stones in Josh 4:7). But a זְכוֹרֹן is often written, a written reminder in a scroll (Exod 17:14; Mal 3:16; Esth 6:1; Ezra 4:15, 6:2).²⁷ If the sense of זְכוֹרֹן as an archived record is meant by Nehemiah here, then he is claiming to control memory via controlling writing—he can erase the memory of Sanballat, Tobiah, and company, at least in Jerusalem.²⁸ In doing so, Nehemiah would be

25. In a sense, Nehemiah is accusing Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem of failing to adopt the proper subject status, so Nehemiah is turning their argument back on them: they are the real rebels. Nehemiah is, however, loath to invoke imperial power literally here by lobbing an accusation of rebellion against them. Invoking imperial power is not his style.

26. The phrase הַעֲבָד הָעַמּוּנִי does not tell us whom Tobiah serves, while Nehemiah is careful to mention that “we” serve God. Tobiah probably held some office for which the term “servant” would have been appropriate, yet Nehemiah does not mention that, preferring to have the reader understand עֲבָד with the derogatory sense of “slave.” For more on this issue, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 217–19.

27. Also see *TADAE* A 4.9. The occurrences in Ezra are the Aramaic cognates דְּכִרְוֹנָה (6:2) and דְּכִרְנֵיָא (4:15). These, as well as Esth 6:1, clearly relate this term to archives. Many commentators see the זְכוֹרֹן here as “the right to participate in the Jerusalem cult” (Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 226–27, cf. David J. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, NCB [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 148; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 192–93).

28. And he can, alternatively, secure memory by writing (or including) a list of all those who participated in the building project (3:1–32): “The register functions accordingly as a communal זְכוֹרֹן” (Wright, *Rebuilding*, 111). Wright

assuming that writing is an aid to memory—and that to lose writing is to lose remembrance.

The choice of terms here is especially interesting given Nehemiah's own emphasis on memory. Nehemiah frequently delivers direct calls to God to remember (זָכַר: 1:8; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31). These imperatives often break the narrative frame of the memoir, as Nehemiah leaps out of his role as narrator and clearly assumes the role of author by directly addressing the divine reader. In doing so, Nehemiah draws attention to the fact that he is not speaking at all; he is, rather, writing himself speaking. The NM thus becomes Nehemiah's own זָכָרוֹן in which he attempts to control how he is to be remembered. Writing is Nehemiah's way to secure memory.

Yet even though he benefits by claims for the power of writing, Nehemiah is still cagey about imperial writing.²⁹ His response to his adversaries dismisses them ideologically and theologically, but it only indirectly addresses their charge of rebellion. It would make much better sense for Nehemiah to rest his case on official imperial correspondence ("Go search the archives and you will learn all you need to know") rather than on theological analyses.³⁰ Where did those letters go?

From Oral to Written: More Conflict

Nehemiah continues to use oral (and aural) terms to define the conflict with his adversaries. These opponents continue to "hear" (not "read"); Nehemiah also seems to have good ears:

("Seeking, Finding, and Writing in Ezra–Nehemiah," in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra–Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, and Reader* [ed. M. J. Boda and P. L. Redditt; Hebrew Bible Monographs 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008] 291 n. 60) also emphasizes the powerful link here between writing and remembrance: "Nehemiah's good deeds and the evil deeds of his enemies are remembered (זָכַר) insofar as they are *written* down."

29. Nehemiah claims to have found written genealogical records (7:5) that would support his plan to repopulate Jerusalem (if 7:5b is, indeed, from the NM; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 277, 281). These records also served as a way to determine membership in the community and in the priesthood (a particularly important act of memory), though the NM in its present state does not show us precisely how Nehemiah would have used them. The editor's account of the repopulation only mentions the casting of lots (11:1). For more on writing in Nehemiah 7, see *ibid.*, 289–94.

30. Nehemiah's theological approach does have the advantage of presenting Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem as outsiders to the community, but it has the significant disadvantage of leaving Nehemiah's own stance as potential rebel unresolved.

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he mocked the Jews. He said in the presence of his associates and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish it in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish—and burned ones at that?" Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "That stone wall they are building—any fox going up on it would break it down!" Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their taunt back on their own heads, and give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover their guilt, and do not let their sin be blotted out from your sight; for they have hurled insults in the face of the builders. (3:33–37[4:1–5])

Nehemiah describes (if not constructs) an active culture of rumor. Everyone hears: God hears rumors from Nehemiah, Nehemiah has access to the deliberations of Sanballat's administration, Sanballat hears rumors from his own sources, the builders can even hear insults thrown at them in a committee meeting thirty miles away.³¹ Just as we have seen a privileging of the oral in Nehemiah's introduction, Nehemiah's account of the conflict with Sanballat and company continues to betray an emphasis on the oral in Yehud and its environs.

This emphasis shifts in chap. 6, in which letters (אִגְרוֹת) once again become a focus of concern. Nehemiah begins his account within the oral culture of rumor:

It was reported to Sanballat and Tobiah and to Geshem the Arab and to the rest of our enemies that I had built the wall and that there was no gap left in it (though up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates). (6:1)

31. Clines ("Perils," 155–56) points to the difficulties with understanding Nehemiah's prayer here as a historical account. In my view, Nehemiah is inviting the reader to understand the conflict here as personal and oral, a conversation (however implausible historically) arranged for our benefit. Nehemiah's construal of an oral culture may also be found in 4:4–6[10–12], a text that has apparently suffered some disturbance in transmission, making translation difficult (see the differing attempts of Blenkinsopp [*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 245–46] and Williamson [*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 220]). All these attempts, including the NRSV cited here, show a pronounced emphasis on the oral:

But Judah said, "The strength of the burden bearers is failing, and there is too much rubbish so that we are unable to work on the wall." And our enemies said, "They will not know or see anything before we come upon them and kill them and stop the work." When the Jews who lived near them came, they said to us ten times, "From all the places where they live they will come up against us."

All Nehemiah's enemies (here styled as the enemies of the people) receive mostly correct information concerning the wall from an unnamed agent. But the whispers of rumor quickly become a more formal dialogue. Sanballat and Geshem initiate an exchange of messages, probably written texts, sent via couriers, encouraging Nehemiah to meet with them. Four consecutive invitations produce no result, so Sanballat in his fifth attempt changes strategy: he sends an open letter (אַגֶּרֶת פְּתוּחָה, 6:5) with a servant. Nehemiah provides a transcript:

In it was written, "It is heard among the nations (Geshem also says it) that you and the people of Yehud plan to rebel—that is why you are building the wall—and you wish to become their king, according to these words. You have also had prophets proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you: 'There is a king in Yehud!' Now it will be heard by the king according to these words. So come, therefore, let us confer together." (6:6–7, my translation)

Sanballat cites "these words"—apparently the basis for the accusation—which seem to be the content of the greater Yehud grapevine. Sanballat further claims that "these words," which he has so helpfully written down, will be heard by the king. Sanballat nicely conceals the agent who will reveal this information to the king, but one would think he alludes to a potential written report similar to his open letter (to reach the king, even a powerful rumor will need to be written). Sanballat's letter thus moves "these words" from the oral register of local conflict to the written register of imperial intelligence gathering. Sending the letter as an open letter also makes clear to Yehudites that Sanballat has the power to write, to do official imperial business.³² The open letter becomes an emblem of Sanballat's authority, his ability to act in this situation.³³

32. There is little scholarly agreement on the significance of the letter being open. Peter Ackroyd (*I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah* [TBC; London: SCM, 1973] 287) claims that Sanballat is following a "normal procedure," keeping a sealed copy in reserve. This does not, however, explain why Sanballat has adopted this procedure now, after so many other letters have failed. Clines suggests that this was Sanballat's way of hinting that he intended to spread rumors (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 174), while both Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 268) and Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 255) suggest the letter is open so it could be read in transit. It is not clear just how many literate people would have seen the letter. Surely if Sanballat wanted the general population to hear this information he had more effective means of communicating with them than by writing.

33. The redactor provides a parallel to this emblematic use of an open text in Neh 8:5.

Nehemiah moves “these words” back to the oral register; they are simply something that Sanballat said and devised and thus, in Nehemiah’s view, are not even good oral information.³⁴

Then I sent to him, saying, “It is not according to these words that you are saying; from your own mind you are inventing them”—they intended to intimidate us, saying, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” (6:8–9a, my translation)

Sanballat’s deploying the threat of “these words” reaching the king fails to strike fear into Nehemiah’s heart, as does Sanballat’s claim of the power to write.³⁵ Nehemiah’s fearlessness in the face of words, even written words, reappears somewhat later:

Also in those days the nobles of Judah were sending many of their letters (אַגְרֹתֵיהֶם) to Tobiah, and Tobiah’s were coming to them. For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, since he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah—in addition his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah. Also they were continually recounting his good deeds in my presence, and they reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters (אַגְרֹת) to intimidate me. (6:17–19, my translation)

It is not initially clear what purpose the letters between the nobles and Tobiah serve. They could be reports by members of Tobiah’s “association” in Jerusalem, whose goal could easily be a rapprochement between Nehemiah and Tobiah.³⁶ Nehemiah, of course, does not present them that way, viewing the letters as a tool of intimidation. But just like the other supposed strategies to scare Nehemiah, these documents are utterly ineffective. Only Nehemiah’s writing, the memoir we read, counts. All other writing in Yehud and the surrounding regions does not, whether it is a publicly displayed official invitation (6:5) or a flurry of correspondence. In Nehemiah’s construction, local writing of this

34. The repeated, slightly differing use of “these words” thus may be understood as having a sensible literary meaning, undermining claims that the text as it stands must be the result of redactional accretions (see Wright, *Rebuilding*, 138–39).

35. Williamson’s translation (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 247) of the difficult 9b (“but in fact I continued with even greater determination”) emphasizes Nehemiah’s utter denial of the letters’ effectiveness. As Wright points out (*Rebuilding*, 143), the response, especially when translated this way, also denies the propriety of Yehud governing itself: “he [Nehemiah] effectively emphasizes the point that a monarchy is not a suitable form of government for the new Judah.”

36. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 274.

sort does not ultimately count; it cannot diminish or limit Nehemiah's authority in Yehud.

According to Nehemiah, use of writing by his adversaries is ineffective. Nehemiah, for his part, largely avoids mention of writing, preferring to represent communication as oral. This strategy serves to nuance Nehemiah's own relation to imperial authority. Nehemiah could claim at any point in the discussion that he is governor and has the papers to prove it. But Nehemiah is interested in dealing with "these words," in claiming himself to be the arbiter of oral words without immediate recourse to the archival passion of the Persians. As long as what writing there is—the NM—includes Nehemiah's assertion of oral power, then he will be able to negotiate the problematic power relation of the colonized/colonizer dynamic.

The Rest of the Story: Rewriting Nehemiah

The NM presents Nehemiah's strategic use of written texts. But a text easily slips from its author's hands and can become enmeshed in a different ideological project. In my view, this is the fate of the NM. The redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah contests certain claims Nehemiah makes in the NM, altering the characterization of Nehemiah.³⁷ As part of these changes, Ezra–Nehemiah presents a Nehemiah who follows the lead of written texts, who is made subject to their authority. In particular, the redactor introduces a written oath of the people (10:1–40[9:38–10:39]) and the book of Moses (7:73–8:18; 13:1–3) as texts to which Nehemiah must relate.³⁸

37. Kellermann (*Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* [BZAW 102; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967] 92) claims that the redactor "degrades" Nehemiah's character. Eskenazi (*Age*, 134) points to three examples of the narrator (whom I take to be a construct of the redactor) contradicting Nehemiah's voice. First, the broad participation in the wall-building indicated by the list in chap. 3 conflicts with Nehemiah's report that "I built the wall" (6:1). In fact, Nehemiah's name does not even appear on chap. 3's roll of participants. Second, while Neh 13:1–3 claims the people on their own initiative separated themselves from foreigners, Nehemiah takes credit for this in 13:30. Third, while Nehemiah claims he began his reforms on his own authority, Nehemiah 10 publishes the written oath of the people to perform almost identical reforms.

38. The redactor has a decided interest in written documents. In addition to the oath and the book of Moses, the redactor adds the written genealogical list in chap. 7 (almost identical to Ezra 2), the census report responding in some sense to it in chap. 11, and another genealogical list in 12:1–26. In other words, the redactor's interest in texts, seen in Ezra, continues as a powerful device

The Oath

The redactor inserts a written oath, sworn by leading Yehudites, to uphold certain cultural practices.³⁹ Nehemiah, identified as the governor, is the lead signatory. The requirements of the oath align, in some measure, with various acts Nehemiah presents himself in the NM as taking:⁴⁰

banning intermarriage 10:31[30] || 13:23–27
 enforcing sabbath rules 10:32[31] || 13:15–22
 enforcing debt remission in the sabbatical year 10:32[31] || 5:1–5 (linkage weak)
 enforcing the temple tax 10:33–34[32–33] || 13:10–14, 30–31 (linkage weak)
 enforcing the wood offering 10:35[34] || 13:31
 enforcing the offerings of first fruits and tithes 10:36–40[35–39] || 13:10–14, 31

The parallels between the oath and Nehemiah's own account of his deeds are too close and too numerous to be coincidental. Whatever the precise historical relationship of the events described in these similar texts, the oath's placement in chap. 10 has important literary effects.⁴¹ With the exception of a weak parallel between 10:32[31] and the remission of debts in chap. 5, all the parallels to the oath follow it in chap. 13. Thus, the reader first encounters the people, led by Nehemiah, obligating themselves in writing to take certain acts and refrain from others.

in especially the latter half of Nehemiah. Although I could not treat all these texts in this essay, in my view each of these added texts could profitably be read for their displacing effect on the Nehemiah's self-characterization in the NM. Boda ("Redaction, 35–36) sees this collection of texts in 7:6–12:26 as working a change in Nehemiah. Once he reads them, he acts differently. This may not be, for Boda, only a literary/redactional effect but may represent an actual historical process in Nehemiah's administrative career (ibid., 53–54).

39. According to Clines (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 204) another written text is at issue here: the Torah. The authors of the oath developed it on the basis of Torah: "not only from Nehemiah's experiences as narrated in ch. 13, but from the necessity of establishing a definitive interpretation of the law."

40. This list is derived from ibid., 205–10. For a slightly different list, see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 331.

41. Most scholars see chap. 13 as historically prior to chap. 10; the oath summarized and reinforced Nehemiah's prior actions. For the argument behind this claim, see ibid. Wright (*Rebuilding*, 340, 35–36) expresses a similar result but addresses the history of the text of Nehemiah, not Nehemiah's own career. Wright sees 13:4ff. as part of the fifth stratum of the book of Nehemiah, while the oath in chap. 10 is part of the later seventh stratum.

Afterward, the reader sees Nehemiah enforcing these obligations. Nehemiah's actions and his character now appear conformed to the written oath.⁴²

The editing here blunts Nehemiah's own assertions of authority in the NM. In his account, Nehemiah mentions his relationship to the king (13:6) and persistently claims a place in God's memory (13:14, 22, 31). He does not mention a relationship to any oath. And in his arguments with the people—quite a display of power and rhetoric—he does not remind them of their supposed assent to certain written strictures. Nor does Nehemiah remind God that he has followed written instructions. Nehemiah wants to be remembered for his policy accomplishments, not his conformity to the community's inscribed standards. For Nehemiah, citing an archived document will not do. This is just the move we have grown to expect from Nehemiah in the NM, distancing himself from written documents. But the redactor, through placement of the oath, creates an alternate impression.

The Law

The redactor inserts numerous mentions of the law, especially of the law being read aloud (8:3, 8, 18; 13:1). The book, in the redactor's view, produces immediate results. After public reading (and private study) in chap. 8, the people decide to celebrate the feast of booths (8:15–18). Later readings of the law move the people to active participation in a confession (9:4), the writing and swearing of the oath (10:29–30[28–29]), and separation “from Israel all those of foreign descent” (13:3). The redactor places an account of Nehemiah's actions, drawn from the NM, directly after this sequence of examples, encouraging the reader to view Nehemiah's actions as yet more responses to the ever-effective law.⁴³ But Nehemiah, in the NM, does not present himself as following the dictates of the law, at most hinting at the law's role in his own motives and deeds. In chap. 13, we will see Nehemiah negotiating his position in Achaemenid imperial discourse, a discourse that valorized

42. “Ezra–Nehemiah structures these events to express its own ideology, one in which the activities of a self-appointed leader ultimately flow from the community's written pledge” (Eskenazi, *Age*, 135).

43. The placement of Nehemiah at the scene of the reading of the law in 8:9 emphasizes this point as well. It appears to be a later addition to the text, given the singular verbs in vv. 9 and 10 with Ezra as the subject (Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 288). This insertion suggests that, even after the main redactor had finished, a later scribe continued the effort to bring Nehemiah into line.

writing and encouraged subject peoples to define themselves in relation to writing.

Nehemiah, Tobiah, and Deuteronomy 23

Nehemiah removes Tobiah the Ammonite from the temple precincts. The redactor handily supplies a textual basis for this action by providing a citation of Deuteronomy 23 directly before Nehemiah's account:

On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God. (13:1)

Some scholars follow the redactor's lead, in a sense, and find that Nehemiah was using Deuteronomy 23 for his purposes. When Nehemiah directly confronts Eliashib over the proper use of temple facilities and even enters the temple court (13:8), he presumably needs a basis on which to act. Michael Fishbane suggests the law, especially the law in Deuteronomy 23: "One can hardly imagine that he did so [entered the Temple court] entirely without warrant; and since no Scriptural warrant is known it is likely that he justified his acts exegetically. Deut 23:4–7 would have fitted the bill quite well."⁴⁴

Perhaps if we were to ask Nehemiah his rationale, he would ground his answer in Deuteronomy 23. But Nehemiah fails to provide much evidence that he is following the dictates of Deuteronomy, or even interpreting Deuteronomy in his particular situation. Nehemiah does make mention of the רָעָה—the "wrong" or "evil"—that Eliashib has done by allowing Tobiah's presence (13:7). Perhaps Nehemiah uses the term to refer to a violation of the Torah (Deut 31:18), but Nehemiah could mean this "wrong" is simply an error of judgment on Eliashib's part.⁴⁵ But Nehemiah also notes his recent visit with the king (13:6). While, in typical fashion, Nehemiah refuses to mention his official position in the province, that authority may be all the excuse he would need to enter the Temple precincts.⁴⁶ And, in my view most interesting, if Nehe-

44. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 127; cf. Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971) 133–34.

45. Cf. the use of רָעָה in Neh 13:17, 27. רָע, not רָעָה, is Deuteronomy's favored term for covenant violation, especially in the stereotypical phrases "purge the evil (רָעָה) from your midst (Deut 13:6[5]; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24; 24:7) and "do what is evil (רָעָה) in the sight of the LORD" (Deut 4:25, 9:18, 31:29). On the uses of רָעָה in Nehemiah, see Wright, *Rebuilding*, 60–61, 241.

46. Lester Grabbe (*A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol. 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* [Library of Second

miah were using Deuteronomy 23 as an exegetical basis for his actions, I would expect him to mention that Tobiah is, indeed, an Ammonite. Nehemiah frequently mentions Tobiah's supposed ethnicity early on (2:10, 19; 3:35[4:3]) and knows his genealogy as well (6:18). But here the reader must supply the knowledge that links Nehemiah's action to Deuteronomy 23.⁴⁷

Nehemiah and the Sabbath

Nehemiah is keen to restrict commercial transactions and their attendant carrying of burdens on the sabbath. Here, we seem to be closer to Nehemiah's relying on the written law, but his own testimony lacks an explicit appeal to the Torah.⁴⁸ Rather, he alludes to a tradition found in Jeremiah 17 that attacks carrying burdens on the Sabbath and proclaims the dire consequences of sabbath violation:

Thus says the LORD: For the sake of your lives, take care that you do not bear a burden on the sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the Sab-

Temple Studies 47; London: T. & T. Clark, 2004] 298) suggests that Nehemiah's reticence about both imperial support and his official role indicates that Nehemiah was not primarily serving imperial purposes in his actions: "Judging from the text, the activities of Nehemiah (and Ezra, for that matter) related to inner-Judaean measures. There is not the slightest hint that he was implementing specific imperial policies or directives (beyond his general commission as governor to support the Persian system)." In my view, Nehemiah was clearly implicated in imperial discourse and negotiated a place within it, whatever his "real" work was.

47. Fishbane does just that: "Neh. 13:1-3 is followed by Nehemiah's recollection that when he returned to Jerusalem . . . he found Tobiah the Ammonite ensconced in the Temple" (*Biblical Interpretation*, 127).

48. Lisbeth S. Fried ("You Shall Appoint Judges": Ezra's Mission and the Rescript of Artaxerxes," in *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* [ed. J. Watts; SBLSymS 17; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001] 87-88) asserts that Nehemiah enforces the sabbath laws "without appeal to a law book, law code, or law collection. . . . His commands may have coincided with a Mosaic law code, but the law code was not the source of his authority." Despite the absence of an explicit mention of the Torah, Reinhard G. Kratz ("Judean Ambassadors and the Making of Jewish Identity: The Case of Hananiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* [ed. O. Lipschits, G. N. Knoppers, and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011] 421-44, quoting p. 431) insists that Nehemiah imposes "strict observance of the Sabbath" as a part of a mission that "aims at the fundamental and radical change of the conditions within the Judean community according to the Torah of Moses."

bath or do any work, but keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors (אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם). . . . But if you do not listen to me, to keep the sabbath day holy, and to carry in no burden through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates; it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched. (Jer 17:21–22, 27)

In those days I saw in Judah people treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in . . . all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; and I warned them at that time against selling food. Then I remonstrated with the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the sabbath day? Did not your ancestors (אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם) act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath on Israel by profaning the sabbath.” (Neh 13:15, 17–18)

It is quite clear that Nehemiah stands in an interpretive tradition here.⁴⁹ Jeremiah 17 expands traditional Sabbath observance to cover the carrying of burdens; Nehemiah draws the implications of this sort of ban for commerce. And Nehemiah’s concern for the city’s gates (2:3, 13) fits well with the punishment Jeremiah proclaims.⁵⁰

There is, in addition, an interesting verbal link between the two passages: both refer to “your ancestors,” separating the speaker from the people addressed by the speech. In Jeremiah, this should come as no surprise, as Jeremiah is speaking YHWH’s words.⁵¹ But in Nehemiah, the phrase sounds misplaced. Perhaps Nehemiah uses the phrase to differentiate himself from the people, as with Deuteronomy’s Moses and DtrH’s Joshua and Samuel.⁵² But then he immediately joins himself to the community by claiming to worship the same God (“our God”). So in using Jeremiah’s text (or deuteronomic conventions), Nehemiah commits something of a Freudian slip revealing his own status—his place in the community is odd. He is not quite a Yehudite here (“your ancestors”), even as he relies, at some remove, on the authority of Yehudite

49. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 129–34; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 359.

50. The passage from Jeremiah also fits well with Nehemiah’s concerns for the inhabitation of Jerusalem and the bringing of tithes and offerings.

51. Among the prophetic books, Jeremiah is the most fond of אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, using it 23 times, with YHWH always the speaker. Other later prophetic books also use it: Ezekiel, 9 times; Zechariah, 5 times, again uniformly with YHWH as speaker.

52. Moses (38 times in Deuteronomy; see also Exod 3:13, 15, 16; 13:5); Joshua (Josh 24:14, 15); Samuel (1 Sam 12:6–8).

text and tradition. Yet his place in the empire is also odd. The text and traditions he relies upon are part of Persian imperial discourse. Does Nehemiah speak for an ongoing Yehudite interpretive tradition regarding sabbath or an empire concerned to see local law enforced?

As Nehemiah's encounter with Yehudites and non-Yehudites continues on this issue, we see him speaking more and more for himself, working out his own position. Nehemiah assumes, using Jeremiah's text, that Jerusalemites need good government because they tend to sin. So Nehemiah provides that good government, in the name of the unmentioned empire and the frequently mentioned God.⁵³ And, at the end of the story, Nehemiah will claim to rely most completely on effective deployment of his own power: "But I warned them and said to them, 'Why do you spend the night in front of the wall? If you do so again, I will lay hands on you.'" (13:21)

*Nehemiah, Intermarriage,
and the Return of Deuteronomy 23*

Finally, Nehemiah attacks intermarriage with women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, ostensibly because the children of these marriages could not speak Hebrew. The subject of intermarriage with Ammon and Moab immediately brings Deuteronomy 23 into play again, assisted by the redactor's explicit treatment of intermarriage using Deuteronomy 23 at the beginning of the chapter. But the mention of Ammon and Moab in 13:23 does not fit the context particularly well. Nehemiah focuses on Ashdod as the problem:

In those days also I saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples. (13:23–24)

It is tempting to read the inclusion of Ammon and Moab as an addition, inserted to connect Nehemiah's policy against Ashdodite language (whatever that may have been!) with the policy mandated in Deuteronomy 23, which is silent concerning Ashdod.⁵⁴ It is not clear whether

53. Jer 17:25 also claims that sabbath observance would lead to good government through the Davidic dynasty. Nehemiah may be picking up on this claim, subtly undergirding his own authority.

54. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 397. On "Ammon and Moab" as a later addition, also see Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 53; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 124 n. 51; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 362. Clines (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 246) argues for the originality of "Ammon and Moab" here. Ashdod does not appear in Deuteronomy; it is only infrequently mentioned as object of scorn in the

Nehemiah is responsible for the inclusion of Ammon and Moab here. If he included them in the NM, then he would be making an appeal (though not completely explicit) to Deuteronomy for backing. If a redactor added them, along with the explicit mentions of Ammon, Moab, and the “book of Moses” in 13:1, it would demonstrate the redactor’s interest in linking Nehemiah’s actions to authoritative texts, in this case, Deuteronomy 23.⁵⁵

In either case, Nehemiah fails explicitly to cite Deuteronomy 23 but instead backs up his use of physical force—his famous hair pulling—with the story of King Solomon:⁵⁶

Did not King Solomon of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin. (13:26)

Solomon married foreign wives and it turned out badly; it literally was a great evil (13:27). Nehemiah’s rhetorical appropriation of the story

Hebrew Bible (1 Samuel 5; Jer 25:20; Amos 1:8, 3:9; Zeph 2:4; Zech 9:6). Not even the Philistines, of whom the Ashdodites were a constituent in earlier years, are mentioned in Deuteronomy.

55. It is also possible that Nehemiah uses Deut 7:3b in Neh 13:25: “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves.” Reliance on that text would explain why Nehemiah mentions both types of intermarriage, instead of just the presenting issue of Yehudite men marrying foreign women. It is possible that a redactor has added this piece to connect Nehemiah’s work with Ezra’s in Ezra 9:2, 12 (Christophe Pichon, “La Prohibition des Mariages mixtes par Néhémie [XIII 23–31]” *VT* 47 [1997] 183). Naturally, as in any case of supposed intertextual relation, one could argue that the supposed source text, Deuteronomy, actually depends on NM (Titus Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgegeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemias*; [OBO 183; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002] 214–15). Even if Nehemiah does allude to Deuteronomy 23, he does so only after expressing his power via physical means, and he refrains from directly citing the text in question. Ezra, in contrast, places his use of Deut 7:3 in the context of “your [God’s] commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets,” a collection of citations from various texts (Ezra 9:10–11).

56. Fishbane (*Biblical Interpretation*, 125) suggests that the “deliberate reference” to 1 Kgs 11:1 here invokes an exegetical tradition that has placed Deuteronomy 23’s categories in 1 Kings 11 instead of other possible nation lists. So Nehemiah would be placing himself in a tradition of reading authoritative texts. It could be that an exegetical tradition such as this existed, but Nehemiah’s retelling here seems to be more of an allusion to Solomon’s story in general.

here is quite subtle. Using Solomon allows Nehemiah to mention the unsurpassed excellence of an Israelite king, while also alluding to the very destruction of that power, through sin, that has produced the current political situation. Nehemiah the Israelite stands in the tradition of great Israelite leadership, while Nehemiah the Persian governor derives authority from the Persian emperor, who reigns over Yehud because of sin. Nehemiah will enforce a ban on intermarriage, proving himself more disciplined than Solomon, using acts of violence available to him as Persian governor.

Nehemiah 13 presents, at most, Nehemiah assuming an authoritative book of Moses but failing to make explicit use of its power, perhaps alluding to it at times. Nehemiah also only alludes to his office (a vague mention of an audience with Artaxerxes [13:6]), though his ability to act surely derived at some level from his official position.⁵⁷ Nehemiah presents himself as self-reliant, and thematizes that self-reliance as varying levels of personal physical force: he throws Tobiah's furniture out, gathers Levites, commands gates to be shut, has his servants guard the gates. He fights, curses, chases and pulls the hair of those in his way.

The redactor moves away from this personal focus, heightening the volume of any allusions to written texts Nehemiah might make by inserting possible textual referents, both the book of Moses in 13:1-3 and the written oath in chap. 10. The redactor redefines Nehemiah as a subject. Nehemiah is now subject to the law and subject to the oath, clarifying and simplifying his relationship to the community in Yehud and to the empire. But in the NM, we see Nehemiah as a figure fashioning himself, a figure who represents himself by writing, yet in writing expresses something approaching an indifference toward the authority of written texts. Nehemiah, a colonial subject, both resists and accepts the empire and its essential technology, writing.

57. Fried ("You Shall," 87) asserts that Nehemiah enforces the ban on intermarriage not through personal means but through a "judicial proceeding" resulting in the plucking of hair as "an official punishment." If this is the case, Nehemiah again fails to be utterly clear on the source of his authority.

Nehemiah as a “Court Jew”

KLAAS A. D. SMELIK

In the 17th and 18th century C.E., court Jews (German: *Hofjuden*) played a significant role in the administration of the various courts in the German Empire.¹ This development is remarkable as the Jews were a marginal minority in that period. Court Jews were mostly wealthy business men, distinguished above their fellow Jews by their commercial instincts and their adaptability. They provided all kind of services to their rulers, not only financial support. In render for their services, the court Jews enjoyed special privileges unattainable for other Jews. Some court Jews, unlike the majority of the other Jews of their time, amassed large personal fortunes and gained political and social influence. A number of them were also prominent people in the local Jewish community being able to use their influence to protect their fellow-Jews. Sometimes they were the only Jews who could interact with the local high society and present petitions to the ruler.

However, the court Jew had his social connections and influence in the Christian world mainly through his noble patron. Due to the precarious social position of the Jews in Europe, some nobles could just ignore the debts to their court Jews. If the sponsoring noble died, his Jewish financier could face exile or execution. Moreover, court Jews were often the objects of hatred of the people as well as the courtiers. Frequently, they suffered through the denunciation of their envious rivals and coreligionists, who tried to replace them. The vicissitudes in

1. See Selma Stern, *The Court Jew: A Contribution to the History of the Period of Absolutism in Europe* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1950); Vivian B. Mann and Richard I. Cohen, *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power 1600–1800* (Munich: Prestel, 1996); Rotraud Ries and J. Friedrich Battenberg, *Hofjuden: Ökonomie und Interkulturalität: Die jüdische Wirtschaftselite im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburger Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Juden 25; Hamburg: Christians, 2002).

career and life of these court Jews are not only typical of their times but also characteristic of the fate of the Jewish people in Europe.

Samuel ha-Nagid

Court Jews were not the first to serve foreign rulers and at the same look after the interests of their own community. In the Middle Ages, Jews who had access to the court tried in a comparable way to combine their own interests, those of their ruler, and those of their fellow Jews. The most famous of all is the Spanish statesman and poet Samuel ha-Nagid.²

Samuel ibn Naghrela was born in 993 C.E. into a privileged family that settled in Cordoba. He received a classical education, studying Arabic and the Qur'an in addition to Torah and halacha. Samuel fled Cordoba for Malaga in 1013 when the Berbers attacked. Malaga was at that time part of the Muslim kingdom of Granada. He opened a spice shop in the port city and resumed his career. However, Samuel's unusual linguistic and calligraphic skills caught the attention of the vizier of Granada, who employed him as his private secretary. He soon became an invaluable political adviser to the vizier, who, at his death, commended Samuel to the caliph. The caliph made Samuel the new vizier in 1027, and as such Samuel assumed direction of Granada's diplomatic and military affairs. He died while leading a military campaign in 1055 or 1056.

The Jewish community responded to Samuel's success by giving him the title *Nagid* (Prince). He served his community as rabbi and leader, and he did a great deal to further Jewish learning throughout the world. In this way, he combined his demanding task as vizier of Muslim Granada with the leadership of the local Jewish community. He had even time to write poetry and become a famous poet.

He was succeeded in his office by his son Joseph. A Jewish dynasty of rulers, however, was unacceptable for the Muslim population of Granada. Some Muslims accused Joseph of using his office to benefit his Jewish friends, assassinated him, and launched a massacre of Granada's Jews in 1066, the first known massacre of Jews in Spain by Muslims. We note the remarkable resemblance with the fate of some of the

2. A medieval account of his life can be found in the *Sefer Seder ha-Kabbalah*, a Hebrew historical work written by Abraham ibn Daud of Toledo in 1161. There is an English translation of this passage in Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook, 315-1791* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1938) 297-300.

court Jews in the German Empire, who lost their lives after a period of extraordinary success. On the other hand, we see a rather significant difference: it was not by his wealth that Samuel ibn Naghrela acquired his unique position. In this respect, his abilities were of another nature than those of the majority of court Jews in the German empire.

Biblical Examples

The problem that Jews connected to the court had to be loyal to their prince and at the same time loyal to the Jewish community to which they belonged is a theme we find in the Hebrew Bible too. It is even a subject treated in various narratives.³ In Genesis, it is Joseph who uses his position of power to rescue and help his family. In the book of Daniel, the problems Daniel and his friends encounter when trying to combine a career at the court with their Jewish religion play a significant role in the narrative. In the Esther scroll, Queen Esther and her nephew Mordecai save the Jewish people from total destruction without offending the Persian king. At the very end of the scroll, we find the most important biblical text from the Second Temple period to define the function of a "court Jew": "For Mordecai the Jew was next in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brethren, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people" (Esth 10:3).⁴

The historicity of these stories in Genesis, Daniel, and Esther is debated. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah, however, are considered to be based on historically reliable documents.⁵ In these books, we encounter two servants of the Persian king: Ezra and Nehemiah, who play a decisive role in reorganizing the Jerusalem community after the return from the Babylonian Exile.

We turn now to this part of the Hebrew Bible and raise the question whether we can consider Nehemiah to be a court Jew or not. Is

3. The remarkable similarities between the Joseph narrative and the Esther Scroll were already noticed by L. A. Rosenthal in 1895 in his article "Die Josephgeschichte, mit den Büchern Esther und David verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895) 278–84; see also my "Het plan dat niet doorging . . . Gods verborgenheid in het boek Ester," *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie* 15 (1996) 98–105, especially p. 101.

4. I am grateful for Professor Isaac Kalimi who kindly draw my attention to this theme in the book of Esther.

5. See, e.g., Geo Widengren, "The Persian Age," in *Israelite and Judaean History* (ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller; London: SCM, 1977) 490–93.

the model of the “court Jew” useful for a better understanding of Nehemiah’s actions in Jerusalem? And to which extent did Nehemiah remain a loyal servant to the Persian king when confronted with strong opposition, and how far did he go to protect the Jewish community in Jerusalem and its surroundings?

Loyalty

Typical of the court Jews and their predecessors is their combination of loyalty towards their ruler and to their own people or community. Joseph, for instance, serves the interests of the Pharaoh together with those of his own family. He lives the life of a high rank Egyptian but is emotionally tied to his Hebrew brothers who have betrayed him. Married to the daughter of an Egyptian priest, he worships the God of Israel. When he had lived in our time, he would have been an inspiring example of a successful integration of a foreigner in his new environment.

In the same way, Nehemiah’s colleague Ezra had no problem in combining his faith in the Jewish God and his loyalty to the Persian king. This is apparent in the following passage from the Book of Ezra: “Whoever will not obey *the law of your God and the law of the king*, let judgment be strictly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment” (Ezra 7:26). In this passage, it is suggested that there is no tension obeying the Torah as well as the king’s laws—the law of the Jewish God and the law of the king are easily to combine. By keeping God’s command, Ezra is doing the will of his sovereign.⁶ We have no reason to assume that Nehemiah was of a different opinion. When he disclosed his plan to the rulers of Jerusalem, he connects God’s mercy with the king’s magnanimous words: “And I told them of the hand of my God which had been upon me for good, and also of the words which the king had spoken to me” (Neh 2:18). Nehemiah’s plan consists of rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls. He presents this as follows: “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace” (Neh 2:17). He claims that his aim is patriotic of nature: he wants to deliver Jerusalem from its disgrace. But is this the only reason to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls? Let’s turn to the beginning of the story, where we are told that Nehemiah,

6. See also Jon L. Berquist, *Judaism in Persia’s Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 112.

who was a cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.E.), had become distressed at news of the desolate condition of Jerusalem.⁷ When the king asked him why he had a sad look, Nehemiah explained his grief, and immediately he obtained the king's permission to journey to Palestine to help rebuild Jerusalem's ruined structures. Nehemiah was even provided with an escort and with documents that guaranteed the assistance of Persian officials. In the biblical account, the king is thus portrayed as a royal benefactor, who wanted to show his gratitude to a trusted servant having no personal benefit from this magnanimous act of benevolence. He just acted spontaneously when he was confronted with Nehemiah's grief.

Had King Artaxerxes really no personal interest whatsoever in Nehemiah's plans? It does not seem likely.⁸ In the old days of the Judahite

7. The beginning parts of the book of Nehemiah are considered to be based on a document written by Nehemiah himself. An elaborate discussion of this 'Ich-Bericht Nehemias' can be found in: Titus Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zum literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemias* (OBO 183; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002). The importance of the office of cupbearer is stressed already by ancient Greek authors; see, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemia* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 212–13.

It is assumed that shortly before Nehemiah's mission an abortive attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was made and that this was the reason that Nehemiah was prepared for the opposition that he would encounter. See H. H. Rowley, *Men of God: Studies in Old Testament History and Prophecy* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1963) 243. A. T. Olmstead (*History of the Persian Empire* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948]) connects the correspondence in Ezra 4:6–23 with Neh 1:3 and concludes that Artaxerxes must have been "tipsy" not to "identify Nehemiah's paternal city with the Jerusalem whose walls he had just ordered destroyed" (p. 315). Peter Ackroyd ("The Jewish Community in Palestine in the Persian Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 1: *Introduction, Persian Period* [ed. W. D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984] 130–16) is of a different opinion, and I tend to agree with him. He states that "there is no suggestion of any previous rebuilding" in Nehemiah 1 (p. 149). The passage must allude to the fate of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.

8. "The cooperative attitude of the Persian monarch should not be understood as a purely magnanimous act" (Widengren, "The Persian Age," 528). Note that Paolo Sacchi (*The History of the Second Temple Period* [JSOTSup 285; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000]) has a completely different view: "It would be impossible to establish any link whatsoever between Artaxerxes' decision to allow Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls and Persian policy. . . . The most probable reason is that Artaxerxes wanted to reward a functionary who has been particularly useful and faithful" (138–39).

kings, Jerusalem had been a stronghold very difficult to take. Moreover, Jerusalem was quite near to the border with Egypt. And Egypt caused the Persian kings much concern since Cambyses conquered it in 525 B.C.E. The Persian defeat by the Athenians at Marathon in 490 had significant repercussions in Egypt. On Darius I's death in 486 a revolt broke out in the Delta, perhaps instigated by Libyans of the West Delta. The result was that the Persian king Xerxes reduced Egypt to the status of a conquered province. Xerxes' murder in 465 was the signal for another revolt in the western Delta. It was led by a dynast, Inaros, who acquired control over the Delta and was supported by Athenian forces against the Persians. They succeeded in taking the ancient Egyptian capital Memphis in 459. However, Inaros was defeated and crucified by the Persians in 454, when they had regained control of most of the Delta. This was, however, not the end of the king's troubles.

During Inaros' revolt, Megabyzus, the satrap (governor) of Syria, had been sent by King Artaxerxes I with a large army to restore Achaemenid rule in Egypt. Megabyzus had been successful in his military actions. He had promised safety to Inaros, who thus had surrendered. But his pledge to Inaros had been broken through the intrigues of the Achaemenid queen mother Amestris, which led to the rebel's gruesome death. Megabyzus reacted by returning to Syria, where he revolted in 448. Although Megabyzus's rebellion did not lead to the collapse of Persian rule, it showed the weakness of the empire.

Therefore, it is generally assumed that King Artaxerxes I supported Nehemiah's plans because a fortified and loyal Jerusalem would be an important stronghold for his army, were new trouble to arise in the West.⁹ Nehemiah must have realized this. In rebuilding Jerusalem's walls,¹⁰ he served the cause of the God of Israel as well as that of the Persian king. In this respect, he resembled the European court Jews of later ages. We must add that Nehemiah differed from most of them in the respect that he was not looking for personal wealth. This is apparent from the following passage:

9. Cf. K. G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah* (SBLDS 125; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). But note that Hoglund dismisses the Megabyzus revolt as a nonincurrence. We prefer to combine both events (the Egyptian revolt and Megabyzus's rebellion) as the cause of Artaxerxes' interest in Jerusalem.

10. Archaeological evidence from several sites in the Levant suggests that new fortified garrison-points were set up in the same period; see Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000–330 BC Volume Two* (London: Routledge, 1995) 671–72.

Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brethren ate the food allowance of the governor. The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. I also held to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover, there were at my table a hundred and fifty men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations which were about us. Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; fowls likewise were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the servitude was heavy upon this people. (Neh 5:14–18)

In the original Hebrew, the food allowance of the governor is called "the bread of the governor." Nehemiah did not want to receive it as the people of Jerusalem had it already difficult enough without being obliged to support him. They had to pay the king's taxes (Neh 5:4) as well as to rebuild of the city walls without payment. In this respect, Nehemiah was keen to fulfill the demands of his king, notwithstanding the poverty of the Jews of Yehud. His loyalty was twofold like all court Jews of later times.

Intrigues

The fate of some of the German court Jews makes it clear how hazardous their position was. The most notorious example is the way Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (1698–1738)¹¹ lost his influence at court and subsequently his life. As a financial advisor for Duke Karl Alexander of Württemberg, Oppenheimer gained a prominent position as a court Jew and held the reins of the finances in the Duchy of Württemberg. Due to his success, he gained a number of jealous enemies. When his

11. See Hellmut G. Haasis, *Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, genannt Jud Süß : Finanzier, Freidenker, Justizopfer* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1998). The German Jewish novelist and playwright Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958) has dramatized Oppenheimer's life, first in a play and later in a novel, called *Jud Süß* (1925). From a completely different motivation, the German film director Veit Harlan (1899–1964) chose this court Jew as main character in his anti-Jewish movie *Jud Süß* from 1940.

protector died in 1737, Oppenheimer was arrested and accused of various things, including fraud, embezzlement, treason, lecherous relations with the court ladies, accepting bribes and trying to bring back Roman Catholicism. The Jewish community tried unsuccessfully to ransom him.

Under heavy torture, Oppenheimer broke down and confessed to just about anything he had been accused of. However, when his jailers demanded that he convert to Christianity, he refused. Oppenheimer was brought out to the gallows in the following year, and was given a last chance to convert to Christianity, for which he refused again. Thereafter he was hanged and died with his last words being the *Shema Yisrael*. His corpse was gibbeted in a human size bird cage that hung in the public square of Stuttgart for six years, after which his body was finally returned to his family for burial.

A court Jew was never secure about his future. His success raised the jealousy of others, Jews and Christians. For Christians, court Jews were parvenus who were showing off their wealth, enjoying special privileges that were seen as inappropriate for a Jew, a member of the despised people who were said to have killed Jesus Christ. In addition, even Jews were intriguing against their coreligionists who had gained the favor of their prince. We give here an illuminating example: the tragic fates of Marx Model and his adversary Elkan Fränkel.¹²

The Models were court Jews of the Margraves of Ansbach about the middle of the 17th century C.E. The most influential was Marx Model, who had the largest business in the whole principality and extensively supplied the court and the army. He fell into disgrace through the intrigues of another Jew: Elkan Fränkel, member of a family that had been driven from Vienna. Fränkel, an energetic and proud man, possessed the confidence of the Margrave to such a degree that his advice was sought in the most important affairs of the state. Denounced by a Jewish convert, however, he was tried and condemned on false charges. Being an old man, he was nevertheless scourged in public and sent to prison in order to serve a life sentence, chained and only provided with bread and water.

Like Model and Fränkel, Nehemiah had to deal with co-religionists who tried to blacken his reputation at court. His main adversary was Sanballat I, the governor of Samaria. Although Sanballat did not belong to the Jewish community as defined by Nehemiah ("you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem," Neh 2:20), he was a worshiper

12. See R. Ries, "Bridging the Gaps: Reflections on the Trial of a Court Jew and a Modern Concept of Jewish History in Germany," *Zutot* 1 (2002) 138–50.

of YHWH, as becomes clear from the names of his two sons Delaiah and Shelemiah.¹³ As soon as Sanballat (together with his two allies Tobiah and Geshem) heard of Nehemiah's plans to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, he reacted by suggesting that Nehemiah was a rebel, an enemy of the Persian king:

But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they derided us and despised us and said: "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" (Neh 2:19)

When Sanballat was kept informed of the success of Nehemiah's achievements, he decided to attack Jerusalem. Nehemiah reacted vigorously by calling the ban of Judah into service. This deterred Sanballat and his allies and they did not persist. Afterwards, Nehemiah divided his men into two divisions: one half working on the walls, the other half posted as guards (Neh 4:7–21). Although there came no attack this time, Sanballat did not give up his plan to neutralize his adversary. He invited him to meet him in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. Nehemiah suspected foul play and did not come:

Now when it was reported to Sanballat and Tobiah and to Geshem the Arab and to the rest of our enemies that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying: "Come and let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. And I sent messengers to them, saying: "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" And they sent to me four times in this way and I answered them in the same manner. (Neh 6:1–4)

Four times Sanballat and his allies tried to lure Nehemiah out of Jerusalem, where he would be defenseless against their assault. Nehemiah realized what they were up to and pointed to his full agenda as an excuse not to come. Sanballat was however as stubborn as Nehemiah: he reacted by writing a letter to him:

In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. In it was written: "It is reported

13. Their names have turned up in one of the Elephantine Papyri: a petition to the governor of Judah, dated 408 B.C.E. "Also the whole matter we have set forth in a letter in our name to Delaiah and Shelemiah, the sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria" (A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1923] no. 30 line 29).

among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall; and you wish to become their king, according to this report. And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem: 'There is a king in Judah.' And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. So now come, and let us take counsel together." Then I sent to him, saying: "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind." (Neh 6:5-8)

Compared to his earlier accusation cited in Neh 2:19, Sanballat was this time more explicit. He stated that his ally Geshem had disclosed to him Nehemiah's secret scheme behind his plan to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah wanted to ascend David's throne and become king of the Jews. He even had prophets proclaiming his kingship. Sanballat threatened to report this to the Persian king. It was an extremely dangerous situation for Nehemiah because a report of his rebellion would incite the king to act, if it appeared trustworthy enough. It would surely lead to his fall and death. Nehemiah, however, was not intimidated. He did not go and meet his adversary (and a probable death) but sent him another message denying the truth of these allegations. We cannot but admire Nehemiah's nerve.

When all these schemes had failed, his enemies tried it once again, this time with a cunning ruse. They sought to get Nehemiah to take refuge in the temple with a prophecy about a plot to assassinate him. Nehemiah saw through this scheme and recognized it as efforts to get him to commit a sin:

But I said: "Should such a man as I flee? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." And I understood, and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me an evil name, in order to taunt me. (Neh 6:10-13)

We do not want to enter here into the discussion of which kind of sin Nehemiah would have committed by entering the temple of Jerusalem.¹⁴ What is important to our investigation is that Sanballat was

14. According to some scholars, Nehemiah was a eunuch, the main evidence being a variant reading in the LXX tradition; cf. Wilhelm Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia samt 3. Esra* (HAT I, 20; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949) 103. Other scholars have rejected this view; cf. Klaus-Dietrich Schunck, *Nehemia* (BKAT 23/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1998) 30-32. In my opinion, the comparison with Jer 36:5 is more interesting, where the prophet states: "I am debarred from

threatening to expose Nehemiah as a rebel who wanted to become king of the Jews. We know from the Roman period that this sort of accusation certainly led to the execution of the accused. It is striking therefore that Nehemiah was not frightened by Sanballat's threats. He must have been certain that because of their close relationship the Persian king would not believe this accusation. It suggests that the Persian king himself had commanded the walls of Jerusalem to be rebuilt, when he sent Nehemiah to the city. Nehemiah was merely obeying the king's orders and had therefore nothing to fear. The fact that the king's orders and Nehemiah's longing for a rebuilt Jerusalem concurred assured him that he would remain in the king's favor notwithstanding Sanballat's threats.

Ambiguity

Until now, the double loyalty of Nehemiah as a court Jew *avant la lettre* has been emphasized. But there is more to say. We see an interesting ambiguity in the Hebrew Bible in regard to foreign kings. On the one hand, they are Israel's enemies from whom the Lord will deliver his people; on the other hand they have been appointed by the same God, and when they oppress Israel, they act in accordance with his divine will. Especially in the book of Jeremiah, these two aspects of foreign rule constitute a main theme.¹⁵

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Persian kings play a very favorable role. They are the benefactors of the temple of Jerusalem and of the Jewish people. However, the other view can be found as well: in these books, foreign rule is at the same time seen as a divine retribution for the sins of God's chosen people. This is apparent in the long prayer which constitutes the main part of Nehemiah 9. In the prayer, the biblical history is summarized with emphasis on God's acts of lovingkindness in contrast to the unfaithfulness of his people:

Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty and terrible God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. Yet you have been just in all that

going to the house of the Lord." For a similar reason, Nehemiah did not want to enter Jerusalem's temple. It is not very likely that Sanballat would not have pointed this out, were Nehemiah a eunuch.

15. See Klaas A. D. Smelik, "Mijn knecht Nebukadnessar in het boek Jeremia: Een provocatie aan de lezer," *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbelse Theologie* 16 (1997) 44-59.

has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly; our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or heeded your commandments and your warnings which you gave them. They did not serve you in their kingdom, and in your great goodness which you gave them, and in the large and rich land which you set before them; and they did not turn from their wicked works. Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. (Neh 9:32–37)

The people of Jerusalem and Judah (Yehud) are in great distress because of foreign rule, and they have to pay taxes to their foreign ruler, who has absolute command over them. This is quite a different view compared to the what we read in other parts of the book of Nehemiah, where the people, along with the actions of nearby enemies such as Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, cause their own distress. Their distress is certainly not caused by the Persian king, who was so benevolent that he sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem in order to settle matters there.

There is another passage in the book of Nehemiah that indicates that the Persian rule was not as lenient as one would be inclined to think. In the part of Nehemiah 5 referring to the social injustice in Yehud, the people are complaining about the behavior of the rich compatriots who had acquired their fields, their vineyards, and their houses, and who even enslaved their daughters. The effect of their poverty was that the people did not have enough money to pay the royal taxes: “And there were those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king’s tax upon our fields and our vineyards” (Neh 5:4).

Nehemiah did not change the taxation of Yehud when he tried to relieve the people of their financial burden. Instead, he forced the Jewish notables to cancel all debts and to return all they had required by lending money to its original owners. By this cancellation of debts, however, Nehemiah did not solve the people’s problem how to pay the king’s taxes. He realized for his fellow Jews only a temporary solution. To end the servitude of the Jewish people and to restore Israel’s independence was not a noble task that a court Jew would dream of, not even an influential court Jew as Nehemiah was. Bound by their double loyalty, they maintained the status quo. It was a family of priests from Modein who were not tied to the court, who were to liberate Jerusalem and the land of Israel three centuries later.

Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose

ODED LIPSCHITS

Introduction

This essay explores the sources of the list of the builders of Jerusalem's wall and seeks to detect the stages and aims of the list's composition and its insertion into the "Nehemiah Memoir."¹ After considering the list of the builders of the wall (§A), I examine the formulas used in this list in order to differentiate between the sources and the additions and editing strata of the list (§B). Focusing on the use of the verbs in the list and their meaning, especially the verb *החזיק*, I argue that this verb means "support" and "finance" rather than "build" or "reconstruct" (§C). The use of this verb in the list (§D) shows that the list includes people who financed and organized the building of various parts of the wall, as well as those who were involved in the preparation before (or during) the construction process. An examination of the names and the functions of some of the people shows that those mentioned were residents of Jerusalem with a direct interest in the construction (§E).

Author's note: This essay is based on a lecture presented in the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Antonio, Texas (November, 2004). A preliminary Hebrew version of this essay was published as "Who Financed and Who Arranged the Building of Jerusalem's Walls? The Sources of the List of 'the Builders of the Wall' (Nehemiah 3:1-32) and the Purposes of Its Literary Placement within 'Nehemiah's Memoirs,'" in *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language* (ed. Moshe Bar-Asher et al.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007) 73–89. I wish to thank my colleagues with whom I was able to discuss different ideas concerning this study and share my thoughts: Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Gary N. Knoppers, Nadav Na'aman, Bezalel Porten, Yuval Shahar, David Talshir, Hugh G. M. Williamson, and Ran Zadok. If there are any mistakes, errors, or misunderstandings in this essay, they are entirely my own.

1. For convenience, the first-person account in the book of Nehemiah is called the Nehemiah Memoir in this essay.

Table 1. Linking Repetition in the Nehemiah Memoir

<i>Nehemiah 2:19–20</i>	<i>Nehemiah 3:33–38</i>
וַיֵּשׁ מֵעַ סְבִלְט הַחֹרֶנִי וַיְהִי הָעֶבֶד הָעֲמוֹנִי וְגַשְׁם הָעֶרְבִי	וַיְהִי כִּכְאֲשֶׁר שׁ מֵעַ סְבִלְט כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ בּוֹנִים אֶת הַחוֹמָה וַיַּחֲר לּוֹ נִיכָּ עַם הָרָבָה וַיֵּלַעַג עַל הַיְּהוּדִים וַיִּבְּ זוּ עָלֵינוּ וַיֵּאמְרוּ מָה הָדָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים . . . וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֹבְדֵי נְקוּם וּבְנֵינוּ . . .
	וַיֵּאמְרוּ . . . מָה הַיְּהוּדִים הָאֵלֶּם עֹשִׂים; . . . וַנְּבַנֶּה אֶת הַחוֹמָה . . .

There is no specific connection between the function, the status, and the positions of the individuals and groups and the organization and the financial support of the various sections of the Jerusalem's wall. Similar methods of building city walls can be found in reports of the the wall of Dur-Šarrukin (Khorsabad; §F). The parallels between the two sources and the two methods explain why the name *Nehemiah*, who, as governor of the province, was responsible for the construction work carried out in Jerusalem, does not appear in the list. It names all the officials and other people and groups that were responsible for financing and organizing the different sections of the wall. Each of them was assigned a particular section of the wall, and the sections are simply listed in order. The source of this list in the Nehemiah Memoir might have been a similar report on the progress of the work, compiled during the preparations for the project or even during the work itself. Discussing all the above could shed more light on the purpose of inserting the list into the Nehemiah Memoir and its place in the ideology of the book of Ezra–Nehemiah.

A. The List of the Builders of the Wall and Its Place in the Nehemiah Memoir

The list of the builders of the wall (Neh 3:1–32) is not part of the Nehemiah Memoir,² despite its skillful incorporation into the narrative.

2. This is a common assumption among scholars, mentioned already by J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte* (9th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1958) 168 n. 1; and see, e.g., C. C. Torrey, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra–Nehemiah* (BZAW 2; Giessen: Rickers'sche Buchhandlung, 1896) 37–38;

After Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem (2:11) and his nocturnal inspection of the ruined walls (2:12–16), he gathered the leaders of the people and urged them: "Come and *let us rebuild* the wall of Jerusalem, so that we will be a reproach no more" (2:17). The leaders respond with "*Let us rise up and rebuild.*" So they strengthened their hands for the good" (2:18),³ which parallels Nehemiah's response to the scornful taunts of "Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite servant, and Geshem the Arabian" (2:19) and his declaration: "The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we, his servants, will *rise up and rebuild*" (2:20). This also connects to the beginning of rebuilding of the wall, namely: "Then Eliashib the high priest *rose up* with his brethren the priests and they *built* the sheep gate" (3:1).⁴ The reiteration of the taunts (3:33–35) and Nehemiah's prayer that follows immediately after (3:36–37) can be seen as a linking repetition that stresses Nehemiah's part in the building project, the urgent need to build the wall, and the dangers faced by the workers from Judah's neighbors' continuous opposition to building the wall (see table 1).⁵ This linking repetition, which centers on the verb

L. W. Batten, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 206–7; G. Hölscher, "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia" in *Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testament (Zweiter Band): Hosea bis Chronik* (ed. E. Kautzsch and A. Bertholet; Tübingen: Mohr, 1923) 529–30; S. Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemia. I. Die nachchronische Redaktion des Buches: Die Listen* (SUNVAO 3; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964) 109–10; A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Nehemia* (KAT 2/19; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1987) 75–76; J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 231; J. L. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (BZAW 348; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 118–20.

3. It is hard to accept Wright's suggestion (*Rebuilding Identity*, 114–18), based on Blenkinsopp's remark (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 220), to understand the expression *וַיִּחַזְקוּ יְדֵיהֶם לַטּוֹבָה* (18) as indicating the actual start of work and to connect it to the list in chap. 3 by omitting vv. 19–20 (or even just v. 20). I can find no reason for this translation, or for deleting vv. 19–20 or seeing these verses (or part of them) as later additions (with Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 224–25; K. Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Ezra, Nehemia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954) 220; R. G. Kratz, *Die Komposition der erzählenden Bücher des Alten Testaments: Grundwissen der Bibelkritik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 72). See, however, U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferungen und Geschichte* (BZAW 102; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967) 13 n. 28.

4. Many scholars emphasize the connection between *וָקָם וַיִּבְנוּ* in Neh 2:18, 20 and *וַיִּבְנוּ* .. *וָקָם* in the opening of chap. 3. See T. Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemias* (OBO 183; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003) 82, 83; Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 112–14.

5. This supposition follows Wellhausen, *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte*,

שָׁמַע or וַיִּשְׁמַע and Sanballat (or Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem) as opposed to Nehemiah, is the literary device used by the redactor to join the various documents and lists he employs, which create the storyline in chaps. 2–6, and it appears seven times in these chapters (Wright’s “שמע-schema”).⁶

Most scholars considered the list of the builders of the wall (3:1–32) to be original, written in Nehemiah’s time under priestly influence, kept in the temple archive, and inserted into its present position in the narrative by a late editor.⁷

168; Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 224–25; M. Burrows, “Nehemiah 3:1–32 as a Source for the Topography of Ancient Jerusalem,” *AASOR* 14 (1933–34) 115–24; and Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Ezra, Nehemia*, 220; cf. Kratz, *Die Komposition*, 70–73, which stressed the coinciding repetition in 2:19 and 3:33–35. These scholars saw it as an addition connected either to the list of the builders of the wall in chap. 3 or as a late editorial insertion (in their view, it was an addition of the Chronicler). Wright (*Rebuilding Identity*, 119–20; and cf. Kratz, *Die Komposition*, 72) went even further and saw it as evidence of the late addition of the list of the builders, suggesting that it was drafted specifically for the context of 2:18b and 3:38. Against this view, see Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 17; and the commentaries of H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 215–16; and Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 243.

6. See Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 27–29, 110, 112–14; idem, “A New Model for the Composition of Ezra–Nehemiah,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. O. Lipschits, G. N. Knoppers, and R. Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 333–48, esp. p. 336; Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 224–25; and for another point of view, see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 251–252; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231; idem, “The Nehemiah Autobiographical Memoir,” in *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr* (ed. S. E. Balentine and J. Barton; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 204. This literary device, in which the verb שָׁמַע is central and that accentuates the scornful reaction of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, is enclosed by another repetition, one that emphasizes their growing anger (2:10, 3:33, 4:1–2) and introduces the description of attempts to sabotage the building project. Later, this verb is used twice in general references (4:9, 6:16) to stress God’s place in discovering the conspiracy to disrupt the building project. In 6:1, this verb appears once more as an introduction to the attempt at harming Nehemiah.

7. The obvious exception to scholars’ accepting the originality of the list was Torrey (*The Composition and Historical Value*, 37–38; *Ezra Studies*, 225, 249), who considered it to be the work of the Chronicler. Wright (*Rebuilding Identity*, 119) claimed that it was a later document composed to balance Nehemiah’s contribution with that of the high priesthood. Later, he claimed that the list should be dated to an even later phase. See idem, “A New Model for the Composition of Ezra–Nehemiah,” 337 and n. 11. On the other hand, most scholars saw the list as an original document of local administration, which was inserted into the Nehemiah Memoir by Nehemiah himself. See, e.g., W. Rudolph, *Ezra und*

Nehemia (HAT 20; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949) 113; Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Ezra, Nehemia*, 222; J. M. Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (AB 14; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965) 112; Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 14–15; M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971) 257; R. J. Coggins, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 81; F. C. Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 172; D. J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 149; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 201; idem, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) 202–3; Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 74–76; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231; L. L. Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998) 43; C. Karrer, *Ringens um die Verfassung Judas: Eine Studie zu den theologisch-politischen Vorstellungen im Esra-Nehemia-Buch* (BZAW 308; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001) 134 and n. 21; R. Albertz, “Purity Strategies and the Political Interests in the Policy of Nehemiah,” in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (ed. S. Gitin, J. E. Wright, and J. P. Dessel; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 199–206, esp. p. 200. Few scholars also saw the list as an original document of local administration but hypothesize that it was inserted into the Nehemiah Memoir by a later editor. See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231; Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 75. On the basis of Burrows’ observations (“Nehemiah 3: 1–32,” 116–19), Galling (*Die Bücher der Chronik, Ezra, Nehemia*, 222) divided the list into two parts: vv. 1–15, characterized by the expressions *וְעַל יָדָם* and *וְעַל יָדָם*, and vv. 16–32, characterized by the expression *וְאֲחֵרֵי* and *וְאֲחֵרֵי*. In contrast, several scholars have suggested that the list is composed of two separate lists that represent the two different stages of building the city wall. See, e.g., Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 207; Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 14. Burrows himself (“Nehemiah 3: 1–32,” 119) opposed this view and saw the two parts of the list as a literary device, stressing its uniformity; see also Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 200), who opposed the “theory of two stages” and suggested seeing the first part of the list as the stage when the workers built up the already-existing wall and the second part as when the workers built new walls that were higher than the First Temple Period wall. In continuity with this, see Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 71; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232; Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 44, 157–59; N. A. Bailey, “Nehemiah 3, 1–32: An Introduction of the Text and the Topography,” *PEQ* 122 (1990) 34–40. Reinmuth (*Der Bericht Nehemias*, 84–86) suggests dividing the list into three parts and differentiates from Burrows’s two parts of vv. 13–15 as a third and separate part. The main evidence for the historical reliability of the list and that it is not a tendentious literary source is the full description of the extent of the wall in contrast to the incomplete and limited description of the builders’ origins. To this, scholars have added the use of unique technical terms for administration and the geographical picture that arises. See M. Kochman, *The Status and Extent of Judah in the Persian Period* (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980 [Hebrew]) 119–21; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 201; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231–32.

The view that the list was kept in the temple archive was held by many scholars: see Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 113; Mowinkel, *Studien zu dem Buche*

Having accepted the list as original, most scholars assign it an important place in Jerusalem's reexpansion and the position of its walls in the Persian period.⁸ The list even illuminates the internal administrative division of the Province, as well as its extent and borders.⁹

Ezra-Nehemiah, 109–10; Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 112; Kellermann, *Nehemiah*, 14–15; Smith, *Palestinian Parties*, 257; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 201; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 231; Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 43. See also, however, the remark of M. Cogan, "Raising the Walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3: 1–32): The View from Dur-Sharrukin," *IEJ* 56 (2006) 91.

Some scholars consider the current placement of the list to be a very late editorial development in the book's formation. See, e.g., Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 207; Hölscher, "Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia," 521; and Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemia*, 109–16 (with further literature in n. 8). Mowinckel (*ibid.*, 110) and Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 75–76, even claim that the list disrupts the continuity between 2:20 and 3:33. Against this view, most scholars maintain that the list was inserted at the outset as part of Nehemiah's Memoir (some even attributed it to Nehemiah himself) to justify the literary and ideological purposes of this literary unit. See especially M. Noth, *The History of Israel* (3rd ed.; New York: Harper & Row, 1960) 127; Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 113; Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Esra, Nehemia*, 221–22; Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 14–17; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 149; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 200–202; O. Kaiser, *Grundriss der Einleitung die kanonische und deuterokanonische Schriften des Alten Testaments*, vol. 1: *Die erzählenden Werke* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992) 139. This is not the place to discuss this subject, but in my view both proposals are problematic, and it seems to me that the most plausible solution is that the list of builders was integrated into the Nehemiah Memoir as part of the process of merging and editing the separate literary units and other literary components into the continuous story line from Ezra 7 to Nehemiah 13.

8. For the various discussions on the size of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah and on the line of its walls see; Burrows, "Nehemiah 3:1–32," 115–40; M. Avi-Yonah, "The Walls of Nehemiah: A Minimalist View," *IEJ* 4 (1954) 239–48; *idem*, "The Newly Found Wall of Jerusalem and Its Topographical Significance," *IEJ* 21 (1971) 168–69; C. G. Tuland, "ZB in Nehemiah 3:8: A Reconstruction of Maximalist and Minimalist Views," *AUSS* 5 (1967) 158–80; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232–39; H. Eshel, "Jerusalem under Persian Rule: The City's Layout and the Historical Background," *The History of Jerusalem: The Biblical Period* (ed. S. Ahituv and A. Mazar; Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2000 [Hebrew]) 337–42, with further literature cited there.

9. The list has been accepted by most scholars as the main geographical-historical evidence for Persian-period Judah. This is primarily because of the relatively clear date and time extent of the list, as well as the background for its composition, its technical character, and its wide scope and because it mentions the settlement boundaries only incidentally. See, e.g., E. Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judentums* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1896) 107–11; R. Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. 3: *Die Zeit der Wegführung und die Aufrichtung der neuen Gemeinde*

B. Building the Walls and Constructing the Gates?
Verbs and Their Meanings

As it appears in the MT, there are 56 verbs in the list of the builders of the wall, and all of them are either third-person singular or plural. Of these, the verb **החזיק** appears 35 times (65% of the verbs in the list), 27 in the singular and 8 in the plural. The verb **בנה** appears 7 times (3 in the singular and 4 in the plural), the verb **ויעמיד** appears 6 times, (once singular and 5 times plural), the verb **קרוהו** twice, both plural. These six verbs appear once each: **ויקם**, **קדשוהו**, **הביאו**, **ויעזבו**, **ויטללנו**, **החרה**.

Apart from the verb **החזיק**, which is discussed below, and three other verbs (**הביאו**, **ויעזבו**, **החרה**) that are not important in this discussion, the other 18 verbs all appear in the six verses (vv. 1–3, 13–15) that describe the building of five of the six gates in Jerusalem's city walls. The building of the sixth gate, named **שער הישנה** (**שער המשנה**),¹⁰ is described in v. 6 and in the same formula as vv. 13–15.¹¹ These verses differ from the formula that usually describes the building of the wall, and they are unique in their sentence structure, which fronts the direct object after the preposition **את** (or **ואת**), continues with the verb, and ends with the subject.

(v. 3)	בְּנֵי הַסְנָאָה	בָּנוּ	אֶת שַׁעַר הַדָּגִים	!
(v. 6)	וּמִשְׁלֵם בֶּן פִּסְתָּ	יֹדְעֵה בֶן פִּסְתָּ	הַחֲזִיקוּ אֶת שַׁעַר הַיְּשָׁנָה	!
(v. 13)	תָּנוּן וְשִׁי בִּי זְנוּחַ	הַחֲזִיק	אֶת שַׁעַר הַגִּזְיָא	!
(v. 14)	בֵּית הַכֶּרֶם	מֶלֶכְיָה בֶן רִקְבָּה	הַחֲזִיקוּ אֶת שַׁעַר הָאֲשָׁפוֹת	!
(v. 15)	פֶּלֶךְ הַמִּצְפָּה	שִׁלּוֹן בֶּן כָּל חֲזָה	הַחֲזִיק אֶת שַׁעַר הָעֵין	!

The verb **בנה** (“build”) is associated with the gates in five of its seven appearances in the list (vv. 1, 3, 13, 14, 15). In two additional cases

(Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1929) 49–53; Z. Kallai, *The Northern Boundaries of Judah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960 [Hebrew]) 87–94; E. Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 BC* (Jerusalem: Bialik Insittute, 1973 [Hebrew]) 242–45; Williamson, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography*, 14–15.

10. On the correction in the MT, see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 204–5; idem, *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography*, 68; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 234; O. Lipschits, “From Geba to Beersheba: A Further Discussion,” *RB* 111 (2004) 360–61.

11. Reinmuth noticed the unique pattern of vv. 13–15, their connection to v. 6, and a similarity with v. 3 (*Der Bericht Nehemias*, 84) and suggested that these verses were a separate source inserted into the two parts of the list (in his opinion, vv. 1–12 and vv. 16–32).

mentioned in v. 2, it is not clear what was built: "And next to him built the men of Jericho. And next to them built Zaccur the son of Imri." This verse is the only deviation from the usual formula of the building of the wall. In the other cases, the verb **בנה** is applied only to the gates. Where the verb **בנה** refers to the priests in v. 1, it should be seen as mainly symbolic and meant to stress the priests' support and the part they played in the building.¹² It is possible to assume that the work done in v. 2 refers to the building of the sheep gate. Similarly, as the sons of Hassenaah in v. 3 built the fish gate, the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri could have built the sheep gate, and the priests were those who sanctified the gate (**הַמָּקֶה קִדְּשׁוּהוּ**) and put the doors in place (**וַיַּעֲמִידוּ דְּלִתְתָּיִר**).¹³ If this is the case, then it is also possible to assume that in a fashion similar to v. 13, where there is a separation between Hanun, who built **הַחֲזִיק** the valley gate, and the inhabitants of Zanoah who built it, in the case of the sheep gate, "Eliashib the high priest with his brethren the priests" were those who **קִדְּשׁוּהוּ**, while the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri were those who built it. It is also possible that the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri were those who built the part of the wall described in v. 1: "to the tower of Hammeah they sanctified it, to the tower of Hananel."¹⁴

In contrast to the nonuniform formula of the verb **בנה**, which essentially characterizes vv. 1–3, the second part, which describes the building of the six gates, is distinguished by a uniform style. This formulaic style is connected to the first part of the description of the building of the gate by means of an anaphoric pronoun (*they* or *he*) and adds to the name of the builder (or builders) and the description of the building process two additional actions: one action is described with the verbs **קִדְּשׁוּהוּ** or **בָּנִינוּ** (**בָּנִינוּ**), and this pertains to the completion of the building activity. The second action is described by the use of **וַיַּעֲמִידוּ** (according to the Kethib—once in the third-person singular and five times in third-

12. It is doubtful if this was the historical truth. The fact that the list opens by mentioning Eliashib the high priest first is one of the main indications that this list is not part of the Nehemiah Memoir. On the connections between Nehemiah and Eliashib the high priest and on the particular problems between these two characters, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 233.

13. This was the claim of Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 208.

14. See, in opposition to this suggestion, Williamson's reconstruction (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 195–96) of the words omitted from v. 1 in the original list. In my view, this suggestion is reasonable, but this omitting of the missing words seems to be not incidental but part of the redaction's tendency.

person plural—וַיַּעֲמִידוּ), this is directed or pertains to the placing of the doors, locks, and bolts.

15(v. 1)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו	”הַמָּה קִדְשׁוֹהוּ
16(v. 3)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו מִנְעֻלָּיו וּבָרִיחָיו	”הַמָּה קִרְוֹהוּ
(v. 6)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו מִנְעֻלָּיו וּבָרִיחָיו	”הַמָּה קִרְוֹהוּ
(v. 13)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו מִנְעֻלָּיו וּבָרִיחָיו	”הַמָּה בְּנוֹהוּ
17(v. 14)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו מִנְעֻלָּיו וּבָרִיחָיו	”הוּא יִבְנֶנּוּ
18(v. 15)	וַיַּעֲמִידוּ יְדוֹ דִּלְתָתָיו מִנְעֻלָּיו וּבָרִיחָיו	”הוּא יִבְנֶנּוּ וַיִּטְלְנוּ

The style of the list of gate builders indicates that this part of the list was written after the completion of the building project. The list refers to the final phase of building, which included roofing the gates and installing the doors, locks, and bolts. According to 3:38[4:6] the building project was only half finished “and all the wall was joined together to the half of it.”¹⁵ According to 4:1[7], the work had just begun closing the “breaches,” and the continuation of chap. 4 describes how the construction proceeded under the enemy’s threats. Even according to 6:1, the building of the wall was completed except for the doors, locks, and bolts, but “Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and

15. Kittel (*Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, 134), followed by others, corrected the verb *קִדְשׁוֹהוּ* to *קִרְוֹהוּ* and added here “and locks and bolts” as in the other verses that describe the construction of the gates. In my opinion, it is doubtful that this suggestion should be accepted (and see Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 208), as well as the suggestion of A. B. Ehrlich (*Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* [Leipzig: Olms, 1914] 188) to correct the verb to *קִרְשׁוֹהוּ* (and see, following him, Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 195). In any event, placing the priests at the beginning of the list is symbolic, and therefore it is unlikely that it should be corrected according to the usual formula like the other examples. On this, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 229.

16. After the LXX, this verse (as also in vv. 13, 14, and 15) should be corrected to *וּמִנְעֻלָּיו* as in v. 6 (Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 221).

17. The form of the verb here is irregular. Even so, it is hard to accept the proposed two corrections that are based on the LXX (*ibid.*, 222).

18. Following the LXX and the subject of the verse, the form of the verb should be changed to *וַיַּעֲמִידוּ*.

19. See the suggestion of Wright (*Rebuilding Identity*, 118–25; *idem*, “A New Model for the Composition of Ezra–Nehemiah,” 337–38) that 3:38 is reworked and originally reported the completion of the building, connected to 6:15. On the connection between the two verses from another angle, see V. A. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 122–23.

the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates).” Clearly, then, this part of the formula could only have been written in this form after the period described in 7:1, “Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors,” because this is the completion. At this stage, Nehemiah could command, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot” (v. 3).

This additional formula for the completion of the work is exceptional in the list because it reports minute details about the doors, their bolts, and their locks and even uses verbs that are unusual and are not repeated in the uniform formula for the building of the gates. From the linguistic and literary point of view, it is possible to assume that this part of the list was added to the uniform style found in 3:1b, 3, 6, 13–15, apparently together with the additional remarks in 6:1 and 7:1.²⁰ It is probably part of the redaction of the list, along with v. 3:1a, added to open the list. If my explanation of v. 2 is correct, then that verse is also part of this redaction.

We can assume that this addition to the list was intended to stress the ceremonial and religious aspects of the project, along with the editorial decision to locate the list here in the Nehemiah Memoir, which highlights Nehemiah’s role in the building. This was the reason for the linking repetition in 3:33–38, the emphasis on the scorn and ridicule of Sanballat and his companion, and Nehemiah’s answer (2:19–20).²¹

Unlike the formula used to describe the building of the gates, the formula used to describe the construction of the various parts of the wall is more uniform, but shorter and less clear, because the direct object (the specific part of the wall built by a particular person or group) is missing and may only be inferred from the general context of the list. In each case, the description of the building of a different section of the

20. As stated above, Reinmuth (*Der Bericht Nehemias*, 84) pointed out the different sources of vv. 3, 6, 13–15. In my opinion, the first part of these verses is from the original list, with stylistic changes made by the author to stress the gates’ great importance to the building, while the second part was added by the redactor who inserted the list into this part of the narrative.

21. Most scholars maintain that the list was written after the completion of building the walls, mainly because they have translated the verb *החזיק* as “build” and they have not differentiated between the formula for organizing and financing wall and gate building and the later additions of the formula dealing with completing the gates and placing the doors. On this subject, see for example Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia*, 113; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 200; Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias*, 86.

wall opens with a preposition connected to the preceding part of the list.²² Following this comes the verb *החזיק*, in the third-person singular or plural, the name (or names) or the title of the person (or group) listed, and occasionally a remark about them or the part of the wall they are building. This form indicates that the subject matter was drawn up as a list from the outset, though it is noticeable that in most cases there is no description of the object built: the size of the part constructed, its exact location, the route or direction of the wall, or if it had any special characteristics. This may be because the parts of the wall were listed one after the other as part of the whole description of the construction of the walls. Even so, this formula indicates that what is important in the list is the people and their roles in the wall's construction, not the parts of the wall (see table 2, pp. 84–85).²³

C. The Verb *החזיק* in the Books of *Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles*

A central element in the uniform formula of the list of the wall builders is the verb *החזיק* (third-person singular) or *החזיקו* (third-person plural). This verb appears alone in almost all parts of the list, without additional verbs, with few adjectives and no conjunctions. For this reason, scholars have found it difficult to understand its precise meaning, and it was generally accepted as having a technical connotation associated with the reconstruction, repairs, or the reinforcement of the walls.²⁴ Myers translated it as “reconstructed,” and other scholars translated it as “repaired.”²⁵ Blenkinsopp suggested translating it as “reinforced,” while Rudolph translated it as “*ausbessern*.”²⁶ Nevertheless, examining the function and place of this verb in the list of the wall builders reveals a different meaning and usage of this verb—namely, “support” or

22. As stated above, until v. 12 (or not until v. 15, as Burrows suggested) the description opened with the expression *ועל ידו* (or *ועל ידם*) and continued from v. 16 (with one exception) with *ואחריו* (or *ואחריו*).

23. Table 2 is based on the Hebrew Bible. The problems in this version and the proposed corrections put forward in research are not dealt with here.

24. See, e.g., M. Zer-Kavod, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1949 [Hebrew]) 95.

25. “Reconstructed”: Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 107. “Repaired”: H. E. Ryle, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah with Introduction, Notes and Maps* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907) 174; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 200; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 227; Cogan, “Raising the Walls of Jerusalem,” 84.

26. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 233; Rudolph, *Esra und Nehemia*, 114.

Table 2. Formulas for the Wall's Construction

Further Remarks	Basic Formula	
	הַחֹזֵק מִן רְמוֹת בְּלוֹ-אוֹרֶה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 4 וְעַל-יָדָם
	הַחֹזֵק מִשְׁלֶם בְּלוֹ בְּרִכְיָה בְּלוֹ מִן שִׁיבֹה אֵל	וְעַל-יָדָם
	הַחֹזֵק צָרוֹק בְּ-וִפְעָעָה	וְעַל-יָדָם
וְאִי יִרְהֹם אֶתְּכִי יִאֲצֹרֵם בְּעִבְרַת אֲרִיִּים	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּקֹלָעִים	v. 5 וְעַל-יָדָם
אֲנָשִׁי גִבְעוֹן וְהַמְּצָפָה לֹכֵם שֶׁאֵין פְּתַח עֲבֹר הַתְּחֹרֶת	הַחֹזֵק מִן לְטִיָּה הַגְּבִיעִי	v. 7 וְעַל-יָדָם
	וְיִדְוֹן הַמְּרִנְרִי	
צוֹרְפִים	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה אֵל בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 8 עַל-יָדוֹ
הַמְּצָפָה יִרְוֶשׁ לֵם עַד הַחֹמָה הַרְחֵבָה	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַרְחֵבָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	וְעַל-יָדָם
שֶׁרֶתְּכִי פֶלֶךְ יִרְוֶשׁ לֵם	הַחֹזֵק רְחִיבָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 9 וְעַל-יָדָם
וְנִגְדֵי בִיתוֹ	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה יִדְהָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 10 וְעַל-יָדָם
	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	וְעַל-יָדוֹ
** מִדֵּה שְׁנִית	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 11 **
	וְהַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	
שֶׁרֶתְּכִי פֶלֶךְ יִרְוֶשׁ לֵם הוּא וְנִגְדֵי	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 12 וְעַל-יָדוֹ
שֶׁרֶתְּכִי פֶלֶךְ בִּית-צוֹר	הַחֹזֵק נְחִמָּה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 16 אֲחֵרִי
עַד-נִגְדֵי לֵב רִי דוֹד וְעַד-הַרְחֵבָה הַמְּצָפָה וְעַד בֵּית הַמְּצָפָה	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 17 אֲחֵרִי
שֶׁרֶתְּכִי פֶלֶךְ קִצְלָה לְפֶלֶכוֹ	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	עַל-יָדוֹ
שֶׁרֶתְּכִי פֶלֶךְ קִצְלָה	הַחֹזֵק יִקְוֵה הַמְּצָפָה בְּ-וִדְהָלוֹן	v. 18 אֲחֵרִי

שר המצפה מִבֵּית הַשְּׁנִית מִנְגֵּד עֵלָּה הַנֶּשֶׁק הַמִּקְלָעֵצ	הַחֹזֶק עַל־יָדוֹ עוֹר בִּי וְיִשׁוּעַ	v. 19
מִבֵּית הַשְּׁמֹחַת־הַמֶּלֶךְ : צוּעַ עַד פֶּתַח בֵּית אֱלִישָׁה יב הַכְּתוּב הַגְּדוֹל	הַחֹזֶק בְּרוּךְ בְּיָדֶיכִי	v. 20
מִבֵּית הַשְּׁנִית מִפֶּתַח בֵּית אֱלִישָׁה יב עַד־הַכָּל יֵית בֵּית אֱלִישָׁה	הַחֹזֶק מִרְחוֹת בֵּית־אוֹרֵחַה בִּי וְיִהְיֶהוּן	v. 21
אֲנִשִּׁי הַכֶּכֶר	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַכְּתוּבִים	v. 22
נִגֵּד בֵּיתָם	הַחֹזֶק בְּנִימָן וְיִשְׁשׁוּב	v. 23
אֲצֵל בֵּיתוֹ	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי עֲצֻדָּה בִּי וְיִמְעֻשֻׁה בִּית־עֲנָנָה	v. 24
מִבֵּית הַשְּׁנִית מִבֵּית עוֹר יָהּ עַד־הַמֶּלֶךְ צוּעַ וְעַד־הַפֶּסֶחַ	הַחֹזֶק בְּנוֹי בִּי וְיִתְנַדֵּר	v. 25
מִנְגֵּד הַמֶּלֶךְ צוּעַ וְיִמְעֻשֻׁה לִי הַיּוֹצֵא מִבֵּית הַמִּקְלָעֵצוֹן אֲשֶׁר לְחֻצֵּי הַמִּשְׁטָחָה	פֶּלֶל בִּי וְיִאֲוִי	
	פָּדִיהָ בִּי וְיִפְרֹעַשׁ	אַחֲרָיו
וְהַנְּחִינִים הָיוּ יִשְׁכִּים בְּשֵׁל עַד נִגֵּד שְׁעַר הַמִּים לְמִזְחָה וְהַמִּגֵּד לִי הַיּוֹצֵא	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַמִּקְלָעִים	v. 26
מִבֵּית הַשְּׁנִית מִנְגֵּד הַמִּגֵּד לִי הַגְּדוֹל הַיּוֹצֵא וְעַד חֹמַת הַנֶּפֶל	הַחֹזֶק צְדוֹק בִּית־אֶפְרַיִם	v. 27
נִגֵּד בֵּיתוֹ	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַכְּתוּבִים	v. 29
*** = מַעַל שְׁעַר הַסּוּסִים	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי מַעֲזָה בִּית־שֹׁשׁ בְּנֵה	v. 28
אִישׁ לִנְגֵּד בֵּיתוֹ	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַנְּחִינִים בִּית־שֹׁשׁ מִזְחָה	וְאַחֲרָיו
שְׁמֹר שְׁעַר הַמִּזְחָה	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַנְּחִינִים בִּית־שֹׁשׁ מִזְחָה	אֲחֵרֵי
מִבֵּית הַשְּׁנִי	וְיִתְנַחֵן בִּי וְיִצְלָף הַשְּׁמֹר	v. 30
נִגֵּד נִשְׁכָּחוֹ	הַחֹזֶק מִשְׁלֵם בִּית־כֹּכָבִיהָ	אַחֲרָיו
עַד־בֵּית הַנְּחִינִים מִלְּחָיִם נִגֵּד שְׁעַר הַמִּפְקָד וְעַד עַל־יֵת הַפֶּסֶחַ	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי מִלְּכָה בִּי וְיִהְיֶהנָפִי	v. 31
*** = וְיִבֵּן עַל־יֵת הַפֶּסֶחַ לִי שְׁעַר הַצֵּאן	הַחֹזֶק יִקְוֵי הַצִּדְּפִים וְיִהְיֶהנָפִי	v. 32

“finance,” meaning funding and organizing the building of particular parts of the wall, as well as responsibility for their construction.

In all parts of biblical literature, the verb חזק in the Piel and the Hiphil has expected and clear meanings in the semantic range “renew,” “repair,” “support,” “make strong,” “fortify,” “fasten,” “upgrade,” “build.” But another meaning was added, especially in Chronicles—“support and (financially) maintain the temple” with silver and gold, or even with the spoils of war.²⁷ The description in 1 Chr 26:27 (מִן הַמִּלְחָמוֹת וּמִן הַשְּׁלָל הַקָּדִישׁ לַחֲזֹק לְבֵית יְהוָה) does not concern building or repairing the temple (which had not yet been built) and is the most obvious example that it cannot be interpreted here in the usual sense of repairing or renewing the temple. The two verbs חזק and חזקוּ should be understood with the general meaning “wealth dedicated to the temple treasury,” even if it was to be reserved for a certain time. This meaning is even more obvious in the expressions in Chronicles that are analogous to the expression לחזק את בֵּית ה' in the book of Kings. Opposite the clear connection in Kings between the collection of silver for the house of God and the act of building and repairing the temple, the parallel passages in Chronicles suggest a broader connotation of “financial support for the maintenance of the house of God,” meaning, among other things, support for the reconstruction and repairs of the temple.²⁸

27. A direct parallel between החזיק and תמך is found only in Prov 3:18

28. 2 Kgs 12:6 shows clearly the usual meaning of this expression: Jehoash the king ordered the priests to collect silver for repairing the temple, in order to conduct the reconstructions (“וְהָיָה יְחֹזֶק אֶת-בְּדֹק הַבַּיִת לְאֲשֹׁר יָמָא שֶׁם בְּדֹק”) In the parallel version in 2 Chr 24:4–5 it is reported that after the decision of Joash “to repair the house of the Lord”, he ordered the priests and Levites to collect the silver in order to conduct “annual repairs to the Temple of Yahweh” (“חֲזֹק אֶת-בֵּית ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם”). There are no actual works in Chronicles, but only creating the financial support for the reparations. Also in 2 Kgs 12:8 there is a clear reference to the actual repairs in the temple: “Then King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said to them, ‘Why are you not repairing the house?’” (“וַיִּקְרָא הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוֹאָשׁ לַיהוֹדָד עַד הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר לָכֵן אֵינִי מְרֹדֵעַ אֵינְכֶם מְחַזְּקִים אֶת-בְּדֹק הַבַּיִת”). In this case too, the parallel in 2 Chr 24:6–7 stresses that the silver is collected for the empty temple treasury, and there is no mention of repairs in the temple. In the same vein, it is also stated in 2 Chr 34:8 that the aim of the delegation Josiah sent was to collect silver from all Israel in order to “חֲזֹק אֶת-בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ”. All translations and interpretations stated that the aim of this act was “to repair the house of the LORD.” Indeed, this is the case in 2 Kgs (22:5–6), which states that the silver was collected to build and repair the temple: “and let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD; and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house

When the verb חזק appears in Chronicles in connection with building and reconstructing projects, it suggests a physical strengthening of the temple (with iron and copper).²⁹

Most scholars link the Chronicles descriptions of the annual collection of silver for the temple with the commandment in Exod 30:11–16 (see also 38:25–26) to donate the half-shekel to the temple וְנָתַתָּ אֹתוֹ עַל־ עֲבֹדַת אֱלֹהֵי מוֹעֵד.³⁰ The stress is on the fact that the silver was collected to finance numerous works in the temple, similar to Neh 10:33, which states וְהָעֵמֶד נוֹעַלֵנוּ מִצִּדֵּי וְתִלְתֵּת עֲלֵינוּ שְׁלִישׁ יֵת הַשֶּׁקֶל לְבִשְׁנָה לְעֵבֶד תְּבִית אֱלֹהֵינוּ. It seems that on this basis the translation of the verb חזק in the Piel and Hiphil should be understood as it is elsewhere in Nehemiah.

A good example of this meaning of the verb in connection with the building of the wall is found in Neh 5:16. In v. 14, Nehemiah declares that, since serving as governor (פְּתָחָה), he and his brothers “have not eaten the bread of the governor,” whereas those who preceded him “laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver.” He emphasizes that he not only avoided acting as previous governors did but he also וְגַם בְּמִן לֹאכַת הַחוּמָה הָאֵת הַחֲזֻקָּתִי (5:16). Most scholars understand the verb החזקתי here as

of the LORD, repairing the house, that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons, as well as for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house.” In 2 Chr 34:10–11, in contrast, there is a separation between the silver given “in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD,” who are “doing in the house of the LORD, in order to check and strengthen the house” (עָשׂוּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְמַדּוּל חֲזַק הַבַּיִת) and the next phase, where the silver was given to the works in the temple (“the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone and timber for binders and beams for the buildings which the kings of Judah had let go to ruin”).

29. According to 2 Kgs 12:13, the collected silver is to be used to “repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.” 2 Chr 24:12 (parallel to vv. 4–5) differentiates between the payment to “masons and carpenters [who] set about repairing the Temple of Yahweh” and the payment to “iron workers and bronze workers [who] labored to strengthen the Temple of Yahweh.” This is probably the reason for the separation between the building of “towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate and at the valley gate and at the angle” by Uzziah and the additional verb at the end of this verse, stating that he וְאַמְצָהוּ (“strengthen them”). This should also be the meaning of this verb in 2 Chr 29:3 (where the subject of the sentence is the doors of the temple) and in 32:5, where Hezekiah “strengthened the Millo in the city of David” (וַיְחַזֵּק), again, not in the context of building the wall.

30. See the views of Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia*, 177–79; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 137–38; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 335–36; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 316, with further literature there.

referring to Nehemiah's part in the building of the wall but have difficulty pinpointing the exact meaning.³¹ But this verse, which is a late insertion in the text,³² is meant to lay additional stress on the difference between Nehemiah and the governors prior to him. It seems that the late redactor wished to emphasize that Nehemiah did not merely refrain from taking silver from the people; he actually supported (financed, paid for) the building of the wall with his own silver. Nehemiah used the silver not to enlarge his estate but to support public works.

This unique meaning of the verb **החזיק** in the Piel and the Hiphil characterizes late Biblical Hebrew, which meets the "three conditions" defined by Hurvitz. Despite the enormous distance in time, it seems possible to connect the meaning of this verb as "support," "finance," or "donate" with the use of the root **חזק** in the local Aramaic Itpael.³³ This verb appears in the expressions **אתחזק ועבד** and **אתחזק ויהב** (meaning "donated and made," "donated and gave") in the dedicatory inscription at 'Ibelin and Navaran and in the meanings "donation to" or "support for" in the inscriptions from Beit Shean and Navaran.³⁴

D. On the Place and the Meaning of the Verb החזיק in Nehemiah 3

Examining the list of the builders of the wall in light of the translation of the verb **החזיק** suggested above shows that a distinction must be made between two groups of people: those who were responsible for the construction project, who financed and organized the work, and those who actually built the wall of Jerusalem. The exceptions in the list are "Malchijah the son of Rechab, the head of the district of Beth Haccherem" and "Shallum the son of Colhozeh, the head of the district of Mizpah," who were the only people among the financiers and organizers who also took part in building the gates. According to v. 14, Malchijah built the dung gate and even installed the doors, locks, and bolts. Shallum, according to v. 15, financed and organized the building of the fountain gate and also "built it, and roofed it and set up its doors,

31. See, for example, Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia*, 132; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 132; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 261.

32. As maintained by Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 244.

33. See J. Naveh, *On Mosaic and Stone* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1978 [Hebrew]) 10.

34. See *ibid.*, inscriptions 21, 46, 60, 64, 65, and 69, and compare to the dedicatory inscription no. 76 from Khirbet Susya which states **זכורין לטובה** [ולב] **רכה** [...] **שהחזיקו ועשו** [...].

bolts and bars.” Not content to have done this, “he also built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king’s garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David.” On the other hand, Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah financed and organized the building of the Mishneh Gate (3:6), and although it is not said that they built this gate, they “laid the beams, set up the doors, their bolts and their bars.” These people are in sharp contrast to those who financed and organized the various parts of the walls and their gates and even added *מִדָּה שְׁנִיית* (“a second section”; see vv. 11, 19) but did not take part in the actual construction. The distinction between those who financed and organized the building of the valley gate and those who built it is described in v. 13: *וְנֹהֵם וְיִשְׁבֻּתָּן הָמָּה בָּנוּהוּ וַיַּעֲמִדוּ אֶת שַׁעַר הַגִּיאַת הַחֲזִיק חֲנוּךְ וְיִשְׁבֻּתָּן הָמָּה בָּנוּהוּ וַיַּעֲמִדוּ אֶת שַׁעַר הַשְּׂפוֹת: דְּלִחְתִּיו מִנְעָלָיו וּבְרִיחֵיו וְאֶלָּה אִמָּה בְדָמָה עַד שַׁעַר הַשְּׂפוֹת:* This verse should be translated as follows: “Hanun financed and organized the building of the valley gate and the inhabitants of Zanoah built it; they set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and built a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the dung gate.” It is therefore impossible to accept the opinion of commentators and scholars who improperly altered the verb *הַחֲזִיק* from the third-person singular to the third-person plural, because this change would mean that Hanun *as well as* the inhabitants of Zanoah built the Valley Gate together.³⁵ This change has no practical or grammatical justification, and there is no textual evidence for it. It seems that in this verse there is the usual use of the formula for building the gates, but with a clear distinction between the two actions: Hanun organized and financed the building project, and the people of Zanoah built the gate and furthermore “set its doors, its bolts, and its bars” and built “a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the dung gate.” It should be emphasized that in the entire list, the verb *הַחֲזִיקוּ* (third-person plural) appears eight times, and in each case it refers to a group: the Tekoites (vv. 5 and 27), the Levites (v. 17), the priests from the surrounding region (v. 22),³⁶ the priests (v. 28), and the goldsmiths and the merchants (v. 32). Only once are two persons, “Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah” (v. 6), referred to with this verb in third-person plural, while in v. 18 it is unclear to whom “their brethren, Bavvai the son of Henadad” refers. But never is there any mention of a particular person

35. Myers (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 108); Williamson, (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 197), Blenkinsopp (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 228), and others translated the verb *הַחֲזִיק* in the plural and understood it as the plural of “Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah.” On the other hand, see, for example, the translation and commentary of Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia*, 116–17.

36. See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 195, 198.

together with a specific group, and in all cases is the distinction maintained between the particular group of those who actually built the wall and the people who financed and organized it.

Against this background, it is possible to distinguish the unique linguistic composition of 3:3, the only verse that describes the construction of the gates but does not mention who financed and organized the building and states that *הָקְרוּהוּ וַיַּעֲמִידוּ* *וְעָתָשׁ גִּים בְּנוֹ בֶּן גִּי הָסֵנָא הָהֵם* . According to the above reconstruction, the editor's desire to stress the role of Eliashib the High Priest and his fellow priests produced the changes in v. 1, as well as the identification of the priests as the builders of the sheep gate, leaving the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri as two exceptions in the list without mention of what they built. It is possible to assume that originally vv. 1–2 were part of the same formula, where Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brother priests and organized and financed the building project, while the men of Jericho and Zaccur the son of Imri actually built the sheep gate.

The above proposed translation clarifies v. 5, according to which *וְעַל־יָדָם הָחֹזֵק יָקוֹ הַתְּעִים וְאֵד יִרְיָה־סֶאֱהָב יָאוֹ צֹרֶם בְּעֶבְרַת אֲדָנֵיהֶם* . This in itself accentuates the verb *הַחֲזִיק* as meaning administrative and financial support. This background highlights the excellent example of the Tekoites, who were able both to finance and to take part in building and even to contribute financially to another section, while *אֵד יִרְיָהֶם* are criticized for not taking part in building the walls of Jerusalem.

E. Who Financed and Organized the Building of the Different Sections of Jerusalem's City Walls?

Given the above interpretations of the verb *הַחֲזִיק* and of v. 5, it is possible to define more accurately the identity of the people who financed and organized the building of various sections of the wall. Excepting a few people who worked on two sections, the list is segmented into well-defined groups or persons each responsible for organizing and financially supporting a particular section: twenty sections of the wall were built with the financial support and organization of individuals mentioned only by name; eight sections were organized and financially supported by persons in official positions or heads of districts, subdistricts, or settlements.³⁷ Five sections are mentioned as organized and

37. Individuals mentioned by name: Zaccur the son of Imri (v. 2); Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz (two sections, vv. 4, 21); Meshullam

financially supported by persons in cultic positions, such as priests, Levites, and temple servants.³⁸ Another section of the wall was financed and organized by Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, who held another official position in Jerusalem—"the keeper of the east gate" (v. 29). Four sections were financed and organized by settlements from outlying areas of the province.³⁹ One part of the wall was financed and organized by "the goldsmiths and the merchants," two groups referred to

the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel (two sections, vv. 4, 30); Zadok the son of Baana (v. 4); Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam, the son of Besodeiah (v. 6); Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite (v. 7); Uzziel the son of Harhaiah (v. 8); Jedaiah the son of Harumaph (v. 10); Hattush the son of Hashabneiah (v. 10); Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab (v. 11); Hanun (v. 13); Baruch the son of Zaccai (a correction from Zabbai; v. 20); Benjamin and Hasshub (v. 23); Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah (v. 23); Binnui the son of Henadad (v. 24); Palal the son of Uzai (v. 25); Pedaiah the son of Parosh (v. 25); Zadok the son of Immer (v. 29); Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah (v. 29); Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, (v. 30); Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph (v. 30); and Meshullam the son of Berechiah (v. 30).

Persons in official positions and heads of districts, subdistricts, or settlements: Rephaiah the son of Hur, the head of half the district of Jerusalem (v. 9); Shallum the son of Hallohesh, the head of half the district of Jerusalem (v. 12); Malchijah the son of Rechab, the head of the district of Beth-haccherem (v. 14); Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the head of the district of Mizpah (v. 15); Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the head of half the district of Beth-zur (v. 15); Hashabiah, the head of half the district of Keilah (v. 17); Bavvai the son of Henadad, the head of half the district of Keilah (v. 18); Ezer the son of Jeshua, the head of Mizpah (v. 19).

38. Priests: Eliashib the high priest with his brothers the priests (v. 1); the priests from the surrounding region (v. 22; and see Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 195, 198); the priests as a group built "every one over against his own house" (v. 28). Levites: One section of the wall was financed and organized by a Levite family headed by Rehum the son of Bani (v. 17). Temple servants: One section of the wall was organized and financed by temple servants who "dwelled in Ophel" (v. 26).

39. Out of the four sections of the wall that were financed and organized by the groups named after the settlements from which they came, two sections were built by the Tekoites, and, as stated above, it is possible to assume that this is the reason for stressing that they bore the burden, **וְאֵד יִרְיָהֶם לֹא הָבָּ יָאוּ צָרָהֶם** (v. 5), and they were not satisfied with one section and **הַחֲזִיקוּ מִדֶּה וְשִׁנִּית** (v. 27). The men of Jericho built next to them (v. 2a), and another section was built by the sons of Hassenah (v. 3). The inhabitants of Zanoah (v. 13) are not part of this category because they were partners with Hanun, who seems to have financed a comparatively large section of the wall.

only by their professions,⁴⁰ another section by (probably) a member of this group, מֶלֶכְיָה בֶן-הַצִּרְפִּי ("Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths," v. 31), and another by a member of another professional group ("Hananiah, one of the perfumers," v. 8).

The great variety of persons and groups mentioned in the list proves that there was no direct connection between the function, status, and position of the individuals and groups and the organization and financial support of the sections of Jerusalem's wall.⁴¹ It is therefore possible to assume that persons in the list designated without any title were inhabitants of Jerusalem who could afford to organize the building of a section of the wall and undertake the financial burden of the enterprise.⁴² From this, we may deduce that those who held official posts in the administration of the province, who bore the title שָׂר and were the heads of districts,⁴³ half districts,

40. See v. 32. It is possible to assume that they were part of the merchants of Jerusalem who had a definite financial interest in the building of the wall. Compare also with the professions in vv. 8 and 31, and see Smith, *Palestinian Parties*, 119.

41. It is not known why certain tasks were given to those specifically mentioned in the list, because there are other important persons not mentioned in the list, nor is there any indication of whether tasks were assigned or chosen, based on the workers' personal understanding of the need for the construction or their connections with the leaders of the people or with the governor, or for any other reason. Against the common assumption that all the important people of that time were mentioned in the list see, e.g., Wright, *Rebuilding Identity*, 91.

42. Smith has already understood the role of the individuals and the groups mentioned in the list in a similar way (*Palestinian Parties*, 129); and see in this vein Blenkinsopp's note in *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 129.

43. Most scholars have understood the term פֶּלֶךְ, mentioned only in Nehemiah 3 (eight times in vv. 9, 12, 14–18), as district מִחֹר. See, e.g., Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judentums*, 166–67; Noth, *The History of Israel*, 325; S. Herrmann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament Times* (London: SCM, 1975) 315; Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* (ed. and trans. A. Rainey; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979) 418; Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 175; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 150; J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 642; G. W. Ahlström, *The History of Palestine from the Palaeolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest* (JSOTSup 146; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 843. See E. A. Speiser's fundamental discussion on the term *pilku* ("Akkadian Documents from Ras Shamra," *JAOS* 75 [1956] 161–62), and cf. the explanations of Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 206), Blenkinsopp (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232, 235–36) and M. Weinfeld ("Pelekh in Nehemiah 3," in *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography Presented to Zech-*

and settlements, did not contribute as part of their official obligations but because they could bear the cost of the building project they themselves funded and organized.⁴⁴ The text does not say that these persons lived in the areas assigned to them, or that they built the section of the wall with the assistance of people from that area. It seems that the difference between the people who served in the administration of the province and those mentioned by name and not by title lies in the fact that the officials were subordinate to the governor, who could require them to pay the expenses.

It is possible to assume that most of the organizers of the building of the various sections were residents of Jerusalem, who had a direct inter-

aria Kallai [ed. G. Galil and M. Weinfeld; Leiden: Brill, 2000] 249). A. Demsky claimed that פִּלְגָּ was an administrative term for a group of workers drafted for labor ("Pelekh in Nehemiah 2," *IEJ* 33 [1983] 242–44; idem, "The Days of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *The History of the People of Israel*, vol. 5: *The Return to Zion: The Period of Persian Rule* [ed. H. Tadmor; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1983] 53). Demsky was followed by J. N. Graham, "'Vinedressers and Plowmen,' 2 Kings 25:12 and Jeremiah 52:16," *BA* 47 (1984) 57; C. E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 80; K. Hoglund, "The Material Culture of the Persian Period and the Society of the Second Temple Period," in *Second Temple Studies*, vol. 3: *Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture* (ed. P. R. Davies and J. M. Halligen; JSOTSup 340; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2002) 16; and D. Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (London: Equinox, 2005) 213–16. This is the direction already taken by R. A. Bowman, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (New York: Abingdon, 1954) 267. However, apart from the method problem of the sources on which Demsky had based his work (and see §F, below), this contention cannot be accepted because only seven segments of the wall were built by "group leaders" of this kind. This would also demand that Judah had an extremely complicated if well-developed administrative system in which each district had supervisors for conscripted workers, which would indicate many of these undertakings. For criticism on this interpretation, see: Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 206; C. E. Carter, *A Social and Demographic Study of the Post-exilic Judah* (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1991) 75–76 and n. 71; N. Na'aman, "The Historical Background of the Philistine Attack on Ahaz in 2 Chronicles 28:18," in *Dor Le-Dor: Studies in Honor of Joshua Efron* (ed. A. Kashner and A. Oppenheimer; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1995 [Hebrew]) 21 n. 39; Weinfeld, "Pelekh in Nehemiah 3," 249–50; Cogan, "Raising the Walls of Jerusalem," 89 n. 10.

44. It is not surprising that those who organized and financed the building of the various sections of the wall are denoted by a variety of official titles and personal names according to their places of residence. This combination strengthens the supposition that the official titles were not connected to the specified assignments of the building project.

est in the construction. Among them, nine were responsible for the part of the wall near their houses: four sections of the wall were financed and organized by persons who lived **נִגְד** (“in front of”) part of the wall (vv. 10, 23, 28, 29). One section of the wall was **נִגְד נִשְׁכָּתוֹ** (“in front of his room”) regarding Meshullam the son of Berechiah (v. 30), and another section was **אֶצְל בֵּיתוֹ** (“next to his house”) regarding Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah (v. 23). The goldsmiths and the merchants organized and financed the section of the wall adjacent to their house, and they are mentioned directly after Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths responsible for the section **עַד-בֵּית הַנְּתִינִים וְהַרְכָּלִים** (“as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants,” vv. 31–32). So it is possible to assume that the temple servants who resided in the Ophel were responsible for financing and organizing the section of the wall “as far as the place opposite the water gate toward the east, and the projecting tower” (v. 26) and that continuing from there “Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah the keeper of the east gate” (v. 29) financed and organized the section of the wall by that gate.

There is hardly any connection between the names in the list of the “returnees” (Nehemiah 7 = Ezra 2) and the names mentioned in Nehemiah 3 and the fact that several of the persons named in Nehemiah 3 are mentioned elsewhere in the book of Nehemiah (especially in the Memoir) as being among his opponents⁴⁵ All these facts reinforce the assumption that the list is a separate source, incorporated in the Nehemiah Memoir for literary and ideological purposes.

45. Note especially Eliashib the high priest (Neh 13:4–8, 28; however, see Rudolph [*Esra und Nehemia*, 203–4] and Blenkinsopp [*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 353–54], who think that vv. 4–8 refer to a different Eliashib); Meshullam the son of Berechiah (Neh 6:18–19); Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz (cf. Ezra 8:33 to Neh 7:61–65 [= Ezra 2:59–63]); and Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah (Neh 3:29, if this is indeed the son of the same Shecaniah, the son of Araú, who, according to Neh 6:18, was the son in law of Tobiah; and see Edelman, *The Origins of the “Second” Temple*, 23–24; G. N. Knoppers, “Nehemiah and Sanballat: The Enemy Without or Within?” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* [ed. O. Lipschits, G. N. Knoppers, and R. Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007] 305–32, esp. p. 323 n. 52. This point was one of the main issues argued by Fried, that Nehemiah was completely isolated in Judah. See L. S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004] 156–212). But see, however, Knoppers’s comment (“Nehemiah and Sanballat,” 322 n. 50) and the overview of L. L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, vol 1: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004) 294–313.

F. Similar Methods of Building City Walls

Cogan already noted the similarities between the list in Nehemiah 3 and Nehemiah's role in the building project, on the one hand, and the reports about and the building of the wall of Dur-Šarrukin (present-day Khorsabad) in the reign of Sargon II of Assyria (between 717 and 706 B.C.E.), on the other.⁴⁶ Much can be learned from the royal inscriptions carved on the walls and other parts of the palaces and temples and from the reliefs of the royal palace, but the main source of information on the building process in Dur-Šarrukin and the way the work was conducted, supervised, registered, and reported, is the administrative correspondence and other documents from the Assyrian state archives, written in the course of the building project.⁴⁷ Of special interest are the "Building Progress Reports."⁴⁸

From the king's royal inscriptions we know that the massive building effort was administered directly by the ruler.⁴⁹ However, the main conclusion arising from the "Building Progress Reports" (probably periodic reports prepared at the site to update the king and the central administration) is that officials and provincial governors were responsible for providing the labor force for specific sections of the city wall. The work consisted mainly of laying courses of bricks, installing beams and drainpipes, and building towers and gates. There is a clear separation between the supply of the labor force (mainly deportees, including

46. Cogan, "Raising the Walls of Jerusalem."

47. See: S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I: Letters from Assyria and the West* (SAA 1; Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1987); G. B. Lanfranchi and S. Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II: Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces* (SAA 5; Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1990); F. M. Fales and J. N. Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration* (SAA 7; Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1992); idem, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration* (SAA 11; Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 1995). See a description of the documents and a summary of their content and implications on our understanding of the project, as summarized by S. Parpola, "The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin in the Assyrian Royal Correspondence," in *Khorsabad, le palais de Sargon II, roi d'Assyrie (Actes du colloque organisé au musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 21 et 22 janvier 1994)* (ed. A. Caubert; Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1995) 47–77. See also the summary of the relevant texts for comparison with the building of Nehemiah's wall as made by Cogan, "Raising the Walls of Jerusalem," 86–90, with further literature.

48. Fales and Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II*, nos. 15–21.

49. Ibid., xv.

deportees from Samaria) and the supply of building materials.⁵⁰ In some cases the king contributed, and the building materials were supplied to the workers,⁵¹ and it seems that the regular-sized bricks were produced in local centers that received the raw materials from the central government and distributed them to the builders of the sections.⁵² The portion of work assigned to each provincial governor (*pilku*) was carefully planned, and each sector was well defined:⁵³ “from [brick-course] 850 to the edge of the gate of the tower of the people.”

Based on the above, and assuming that the same principal methods were in use during the Persian period, we may conclude that Nehemiah, as governor of the province, was responsible for the construction work carried out in Jerusalem.⁵⁴ That is why, even if the list was compiled in Nehemiah's time, we should not expect to find his name in it. The governor supervised and administered the work, and the list names all the officials, heads of districts, and other functionaries in the province who were individually responsible for financing and organizing the sections of the wall. Each of them was assigned a particular part of the wall, described in detail in the list, and, as in the building progress reports from Dur-Šarrukin, in some cases the location of the section is missing, and the sections are simply mentioned one after the other.⁵⁵ The source of this list might have been a similar report on the progress of the work, compiled during the preparation for the project or even during the work itself, describing the exact section of the wall that each person was responsible to finance and organize.⁵⁶

Another interesting parallel to the restoration of Jerusalem's wall, much closer in time but distant from the geographical and geopolitical viewpoint, is found in the renovation of the long walls from Athens to

50. Parpola, “The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin,” 54–55, 64–65.

51. Fales and Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II*, xvi, and see esp. no. 21.

52. *Ibid.*, xviii; Parpola, “The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin,” 57.

53. *Planning of the work*: Parpola, “The Construction of Dur-Šarrukin,” 51; and see, e.g., *idem*, *The Correspondence of Sargon II*, no. 64; cf. also Cogan, “Raising the Walls of Jerusalem,” 88–90. *Definition of each section*: e.g., the description of Parpola, *The Correspondence of Sargon II*, no. 64, rev. 5–7; cf. Fales and Postgate, *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II*, xvi.

54. Cogan, “Raising the Walls of Jerusalem,” 90.

55. Cf. *ibid.*, 88.

56. As opposed to the conclusions of Cogan (*ibid.*, 90–91), who hypothesizing that the list was drawn up toward the conclusion of the project.

its port of Piraeus.⁵⁷ These walls were destroyed in the year 404 B.C.E., after Athens's surrender to Sparta, and were rebuilt by Konon in the ruling year of Eubolides (between July 16th 394 and July 5th 393 B.C.E.). An inscription that describes the building of one of the sections of the wall describes its exact place and length (790 feet) and stresses that Demosthenes the Beotian was responsible for its construction and for the transportation of the stones.⁵⁸

G. Conclusions: The Source of the List and the Purpose of Its Insertion

The first conclusion from the above discussion is that the list of the "builders of the wall" comprises both those who organized and financed the construction of the various sections of the wall and those who organized and financed the building of the six gates. As it stands, the list was composed of two basic and similar lists: of those who financed and organized the building of the gates and of those who financed and organized the building of the different sections of the wall. The different formulas used in reference to sections of wall as opposed to the gates suggests that the author of the list placed great importance on the gates. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the two formulas were written by the same author, because their use of grammar and language is the same and they are expertly interwoven. It can be assumed that the editor who inserted the list along with other sources and with the Nehemiah Memoir laid further stress on the gates by adding the second part of the building formula, describing the placing of the doors, the locks, and the bolts, while at the same time clearly hinting at the editorial comments in Neh 6:1 and 7:1. As part of the same editorial process, v. 3:1a was added to open the list, and if the proposed explanation to v. 2 is correct, then it is part of the same process.

This list was not originally part of the Nehemiah Memoir. It was apparently written in order to document the persons who financed and organized the building of the gates and the various sections of the walls. Just like in Dur-Šarrukin, the governor of the province, whether

57. Smith (*Palestinian Parties*, 129–30) and Blenkinsopp (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 232–33) have mentioned the connection of this inscription to the system of building the wall of Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah.

58. See J. Kirchner, *Inscriptiones Atticae* II–III (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927) 290, inscription no. 1657. The translation here is based on P. Foucart, "Les fortifications du Pirée," *BCH* 11 (1887) 129–44. I would like to thank Prof. Ran Zadok for his assistance in interpreting and understanding this inscription.

Nehemiah or one of his predecessors, was responsible for conducting the project. As we learn from the “Building Progress Reports,” we must not expect to find the governor’s name in the list of officials, heads of districts, and other functionaries in the province, recorded in the order of the sections for which they were responsible, rather than in the order of their importance. The source of this was probably compiled in the preparation stage of the project and might have been used during the work itself, describing the exact wall section each person was responsible for financing and organizing. The list was inserted by the editor of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the right place, namely, in the beginning of preparation to build the walls and the commencement of the work.⁵⁹ The editor’s aim was to emphasize the role and importance of Nehemiah as the one who instigated the building project, led it, dealt with the difficulties that arose throughout the duration of the work, and finally brought the project to a swift and successful conclusion. To this end, the editor added the uniform formula of placing the doors and connected it to the editorial comments of Neh 6:1 and 7:1. This was part of the wider purpose to create an affinity between the actions of Nehemiah and the building of the walls, with the emphasis on this project as the most important event in the restoration of Jerusalem as the religious and political center of the province and undisputed center for all the Judeans.

This editing created a direct association between the contents of the Nehemiah Memoir and the building of the walls and repopulating Jerusalem. It placed the list at the center of the process while highlighting Nehemiah’s actions. Thus, according to the Nehemiah Memoir, the information about the state of the walls and gates (“the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire”) was the main reason for Nehemiah’s arrival (1:3), and his appeal to the king shows his intention of restoring the city and rebuilding it (2:3, 5). Nehemiah’s main petition to the king is to provide him with “a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s garden, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house which I shall occupy” (2:8). The first thing Nehemiah does after arriving at the city is to walk around and inspect the destroyed walls

59. As opposed to the assumption of many scholars and commentators; cf. to Wright (*Rebuilding Identity*, 110–11, 119–20; idem, “A New Model for the Composition of Ezra–Nehemiah,” 336–37) and Cogan (“Raising the Walls of Jerusalem,” 85, 91), who understood the list as describing the actual building of the wall. Much of Wright’s thesis was grounded in this assumption, which is, in my opinion, not well founded enough.

(vv. 12–16), and the description the state of the walls says that they “had breaches there and [their] gates had been destroyed by fire” (v. 13). Immediately afterwards, Nehemiah rouses the leaders of the people and encourages them “Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem” (v. 17). The list in Nehemiah 3 demonstrates the support that Nehemiah received from all who engaged in financing and building the walls despite the difficulties (4:1–2 and so on), while chaps. 4 and 5 conspicuously stress Nehemiah’s role and how he functioned despite danger to himself (chap. 6). The Nehemiah Memoir is directed toward the time when it would be possible to move on to the next stage—populating Jerusalem and its demographic strengthening. Only when “the wall had been built and I had set up the doors” (7:1), when Nehemiah could command “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot,” could he also begin to repopulate the city, and the book he found, “the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first” (7:5) was the starting point of this process.

The above discussion shows that from the editorial point of view it was highly important to make the connection between Nehemiah and the whole project of the building of the walls—from the decision to the preparations and on to the final stage, placing the gates and posting guards on the walls. With this aim, the significance of the list in chap. 3 goes beyond the comments inserted by the editor into the Nehemiah Memoir, because it emphasizes Nehemiah’s role in the process and the widespread support he got for building. The fact that the list was not originally connected to Nehemiah did not concern the editor—to him, the important point was to insert the list exactly where it belonged and thus to portray this period as the outcome of the community’s decision to organize its way of life according to God’s intention for his people, under the leadership of Nehemiah and as part of the wide national consensus.⁶⁰

60. In the same way and from the same intention, the same editor inserted the list in Nehemiah 11; see my “Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” *JBL* 121 (2002) 423–40.

On Nehemiah's City Wall and the Size of Jerusalem during the Persian Period: An Archaeologist's View

DAVID USSISHKIN

Introduction

The borders and the size of Jerusalem in the Persian period have been discussed and debated by many scholars since modern research of Jerusalem started in the 19th century C.E. The scholarly discussion on these subjects focused on the reconstruction of the course of the city wall that, as is generally assumed, surrounded Jerusalem during this period.

The debate on these questions is based on sources of two kinds. On the one hand, the written biblical sources, in particular the book of Nehemiah, include much information on the city wall and its course, as well as on the topography of Jerusalem. Indirect data are also to be found in the descriptions of Josephus. On the other hand, we have the vast corpus of archaeological data accumulated during 150 years of continuous field research.

In my view, the archaeological data should be the starting point for the study of Jerusalem and its borders, history, and material culture in the biblical period. This source of information should take precedence, whenever possible, over the written sources, which are largely partial and open to different interpretations. This rule naturally applies also to Jerusalem during the Persian period and to the issues under discussion here. Accordingly, we shall first turn to evaluate the archaeological evidence relevant to the questions of the borders and size of Jerusalem in

Author's note: This is a revised, enlarged, and updated version of my paper on the subject written a few years ago (Ussishkin 2006).

the Persian period, and then, on the basis of the above, and as a second, complimentary step, we shall turn to discuss the written sources.

The City Walls of Biblical Jerusalem

The starting point for the study of the borders and walls of Jerusalem in the First Temple Period—and then in the Persian period—is the reconstruction of the borders and walls of Jerusalem in the second millennium B.C.E. The first fortified settlement dates to the Middle Bronze II period, in the first half of the second millennium B.C.E. It extended along the South-East Hill, known as the City of David, where the Gihon Spring supplied the necessary water for the settlement (fig. 1:1–2). The remains of the massive fortifications of the settlement were discovered on the eastern slope of the hill that borders on the Kidron Valley. Segments of a city wall, and possibly a segment of a tower, were uncovered in the excavations of Kenyon and of Shiloh.¹ Several massive towers and walls were uncovered by Reich and Shukron near the Gihon Spring.² It appears that the famous water system known as the Warren Shaft also dates to this period and was incorporated in the fortifications.³ The city wall must have surrounded the settlement; therefore, we can safely assume that it also extended along the steep slope on the western side of the City of David ridge, which bordered on the Central Valley, termed the Tyropoeon Valley by Josephus (fig. 1:3). Few excavations have been conducted here, and hopefully segments of this wall will be discovered in future digs.

While on the eastern side, and probably also on the western side, topography determined the borders of the Middle Bronze settlement; its southern and northern borders are difficult to establish for lack of data. The map in figure 2 shows the borders of the Middle Bronze settlement as reconstructed by Kenyon.⁴ On the southern side, the settlement may have reached the tip of the City of David, where the Tyropoeon Valley falls into the Kidron Valley. There are no indications of where the northern edge of the settlement was. Eilat Mazar (2006) restored it in a line farther to the south than Kenyon.⁵ At the time, Finkelstein and

1. Kenyon 1974: 82–84, pls. 19–20, 24; Steiner 2001: 10–23; Shiloh 1984: 12, 26, fig. 14.

2. Reich and Shukron 1999; 2000a; 2010; Reich 2011.

3. Reich and Shukron 1999; 2000a; Reich 2011.

4. Kenyon 1974: 90–94.

5. E. Mazar 2006.



Figure 1. Jerusalem of the First Temple Period. (1) The City of David; (2) the Gihon Spring; (3) the Tyropoeon Valley; (4) the place of the "Stepped Stone Structure"; (5) the place of Crowfoot's excavations; (6) the "tombs" uncovered in B. Mazar's excavations; (7) the Temple Mount; (8) the South-West Hill; (9) the Hinnom Valley; (10) the Kidron Valley; (11) Mount of Olives; (12) the North-West Hill; (13) the North-East Hill.

Herzog⁶ expressed the view that the settlement included the summit of the hill, that is, the Temple Mount. The archaeological data do not support these views, and I am inclined to adopt Kenyon's reconstruction.

In a recent study, Finkelstein, Koch, and Lipschits suggested⁷—in elaborating Knauf's ideas⁸—that Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Iron IIA, and Persian Jerusalem mainly extended over the Temple Mount and that their remains have been hidden in their entirety beneath the Haram esh-Sherif, that is, the massive Herodian enclosure. According to these authors, only during the Iron II B–C periods, and later during the Hasmonean period, did the city also extend over the City of David and the South-West Hill. In my view, this suggestion cannot be accepted, and I hope to present my arguments elsewhere.

The second fortified settlement in biblical Jerusalem is the large city of the later part of the First Temple Period (fig. 1). This city was destroyed and burned by the Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. The pottery data from the excavations in the City of David and the South-West Hill indicate that the large city and its fortifications already existed in the latter part of the 8th century, and that this was the walled city challenged by Sennacherib's task force in 701 B.C.E. This city extended over the City of David and the South-West Hill, as well as the Temple Mount, where the royal acropolis, which included the palace of the kings of Judah and the temple, was located. Strong and massive fortifications surrounded the city. Segments of city walls and towers, in which more than one construction phase could be discerned, have been uncovered along the eastern slope of the City of David by Kenyon, Shiloh, and Reich and Shukron; on the so-called Ophel to the south of the Temple Mount by E. Mazar; in the South-West Hill by Nahman Avigad; and possibly also on Hagai Street by Amos Kloner and in the Ottoman citadel near Jaffa Gate by Geva.⁹

The “Interim Period”

During the long “interim period” between these two fortified settlements, that is, between the end of the Middle Bronze period in the 16th

6. Finkelstein, Herzog, Singer-Avitz, and Ussishkin 2007: 147 n. 2.

7. Finkelstein, Koch, and Lipschits 2011.

8. See Knauf 2000.

9. See Franken and Steiner 1990: 50–56; Steiner 2001: 89–92; Shiloh 1984: 8–10, 28, figs. 30, 33; 1985a: 66; 1985b: 302; Reich and Shukron 2000b; 2008; Reich 2011; E. Mazar and B. Mazar, 1989: 3–48; E. Mazar 2011; Avigad 1983: 46–60; Avigad and Geva 2000; Geva and Avigad 2000; Kloner 1984; Geva 1979; 1983: 56–58.

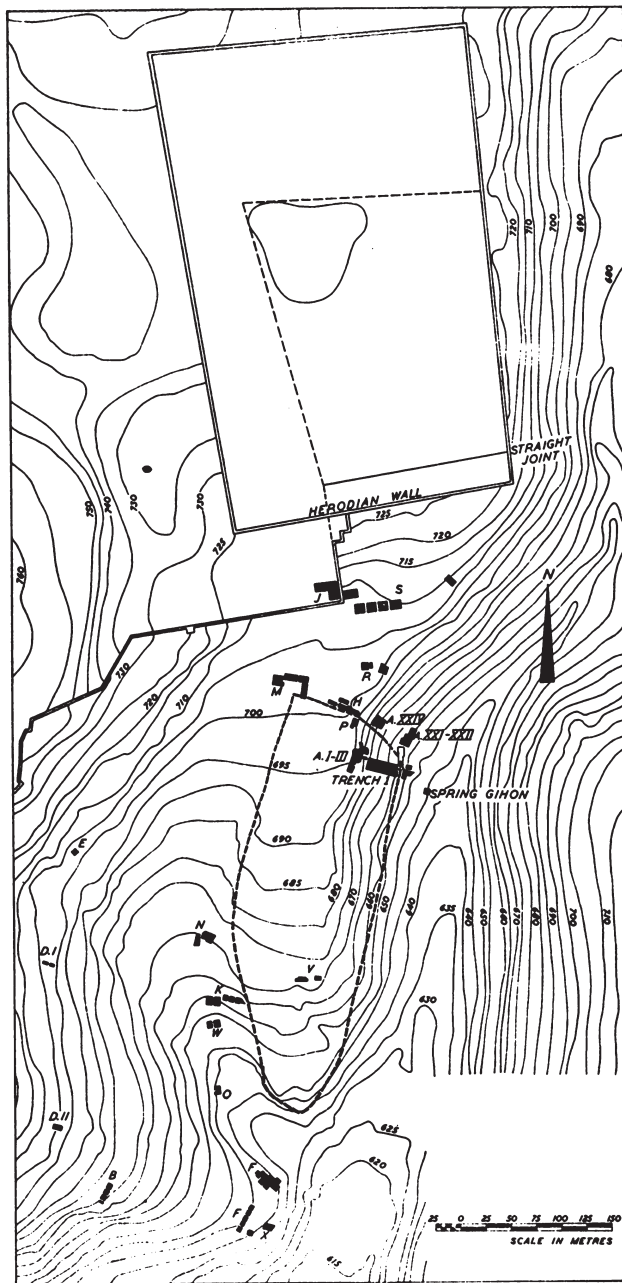


Figure 2. Plan of pre-Solomonic Jerusalem, suggested reconstruction by Kenyon (after Kenyon 1974: fig. 18).

century and the Iron II B period in the 8th century B.C.E., settlement in Jerusalem continued, apparently uninterrupted, in the central part of the City of David, in the general region above the Gihon Spring. This is indicated by the archaeological finds—remains of structures, floors, pottery, and burials.

In my view, this settlement was unfortified and there are no city wall or city walls that can be assigned to this long “interim period.” The lines of the city walls uncovered along the eastern slope of the City of David, both the earlier line as well as the later lines, built in some areas one on top of the stump of the other, indicate that no other city wall was erected here during the “interim period” between the times of these two walls. Contrary to Kenyon, Shiloh, Cahill, and Geva,¹⁰ it seems that the Middle Bronze city wall fell into disuse, and large parts of it were even demolished, at the end of this period. Naturally, its terraced, dis-used remains and still-standing huge towers and walls protecting the Gihon Spring were incorporated by the builders of the city walls of the 8th century Judean city in their own fortifications¹¹ wherever they chose to follow the line of the old city wall, but this does not prove that the old city wall surrounding large parts of the City of David was in use and functioning during the “interim period.”

Kenyon and Margreet Steiner identified two parallel wall segments uncovered by Kenyon in a narrow trench at the top of the slope as parts of a 10th–9th century casemate wall.¹² This conclusion seems unlikely. Recent excavations by E. Mazar immediately to the south of Kenyon’s trench did not support the assumption that these wall segments are parts of a continuous city wall.¹³

The problematic complex known as the “Stepped Stone Structure” and the underlying terraces are usually assigned to these “interim period” (fig. 1:4).¹⁴ It is generally agreed upon that the Stepped Stone Structure supported the wall of a fortress or some monumental compound built on the summit of the ridge. The latter area had been excavated at the time by Macalister and Duncan and most recently by Eilat

10. Kenyon 1963: 9–10; 1964: 8; 1968: 105–6; 1974: 81–83, 89–91; Shiloh 1984: 26, 28; 1985b: 303; Cahill 2003: 21–23; Geva 2006: 66–67.

11. See King and Stager 2001: 213, ill. 98, 102; see also A. Mazar 2010: 47–48.

12. Kenyon 1974: 114–15, pl. 37; Steiner 2001: 48–50.

13. E. Mazar 2007a: plan on p. 59; also 2007b: fig. 5.

14. See Shiloh 1984: 16–18, 27–29, figs. 16–19; Steiner 2001: 36–39, 42–52; 2003; Cahill 2003: 33–54; see recent summaries in A. Mazar 2006: 257–65; 2010: 35–40.



Figure 3. Suggested reconstruction of Solomonic Jerusalem (after Shanks 1995: 74–75).

Mazar.¹⁵ Various structural remains uncovered here have been considered by Mazar to be parts of a monumental building dating to the Iron I period. She labeled it the “Large Stone Structure,” which, in her view, probably must be identified with King David’s palace. E. Mazar also concluded that the Stepped Stone Structure is structurally associated with the Large Stone Structure, the former constructed in order to support the latter.¹⁶ E. Mazar’s stratigraphic conclusions have been endorsed by A. Mazar and by Faust.¹⁷

In a recent study, Finkelstein, Herzog, Singer-Avitz, and I¹⁸ argued that the upper parts of the Stepped Stone Structure apparently date to the Hellenistic period and the lower parts to the Iron Age IIA period, while the Large Stone Structure includes at least two unrelated parts, one at least most likely dating to the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Let us briefly consider the period of the United Monarchy. According to the generally accepted view, based in its entirety on the biblical evidence, Jerusalem was built by King Solomon as a magnificent capital.¹⁹ According to this view—illustrated in the reconstruction reproduced here in figure 3—Solomonic Jerusalem (as well as the 9th-century city) was sausage shaped and included the City of David and the Temple

15. Macalister and Duncan 1926; E. Mazar 2007a; 2007b; 2009.

16. See E. Mazar 2007b: fig. 5.

17. A. Mazar 2006: 269–70; 2010: 34–46; Faust 2010.

18. Finkelstein, Herzog, Singer-Avitz, and Ussishkin 2007; also Finkelstein 2011.

19. See, e.g., A. Mazar 1990: 375–80; Shanks 1995: 47–77.

Mount. This city is always reconstructed as surrounded by a city wall, based on 1 Kgs 9:15: “This is the record of the forced labor which King Solomon conscripted to build the House of the Lord, his own palace, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.” This view has been supported by Cahill based on her interpretation of the archaeological evidence.²⁰

I have expressed my opinion on other occasions²¹ that the reconstruction of Solomonic Jerusalem as a magnificent, fortified city contradicts the archaeological evidence, which in my view should be the starting point for the research. The archaeological evidence is clear and comprehensive, and it is unlikely that the picture will drastically change in the future. It appears that, during the reign of Solomon, as in the entire “interim period” discussed here, only a relatively small settlement, not protected by a city wall, existed in the central part of the City of David.

Significantly, debris fills uncovered in the rock-cut installations of the Gihon Spring by Reich and Shukron contained large amounts of pottery, bullae, and fish bones that, according to the excavators, date to the late 9th and early 8th centuries B.C.E.²² On the other hand, the modest character of the settlement during the “interim period” is generally illustrated in the area of the Gihon Spring, which was the most sensitive point in the City of David: fortifications and water systems were constructed both in the Middle Bronze and the Iron II B–C periods but not during the in-between “interim period.”

Finally, we must consider the question of the city wall segment that, according to 2 Kgs 14:13, was demolished by Jehoash, king of Israel. Jehoash reigned in ca. 800–784 B.C.E., and, as discussed above, the archaeological evidence indicates that Jerusalem was unfortified at that time. Na’aman, however, considers this verse a reliable source that takes precedence over the available archaeological data and proves that Jerusalem was fortified at that time.²³ Based on the archaeological perspective, Na’aman’s conclusion is unacceptable.

The Western Side of the City of David

The reconstruction of the fortifications of Jerusalem in the biblical era as presented above leads to the unavoidable conclusion that a

20. Cahill 2003.

21. Ussishkin 2003a; 2003b.

22. Reich, Shukron, and Lernau 2007: 153–63.

23. Na’aman 2010: 171.

city wall was not built along the west slope of the City of David, which bordered on the Tyropoeon Valley, during the First Temple Period. It appears—as explained above—that the city wall of the Middle Bronze settlement must have extended here at least along the southern part of the western side of the City of David as it surrounded the settlement of the time. The large city of the 8th and 7th centuries was also protected by a city wall. However, the city of this time included the City of David, the Temple Mount, and the South-West Hill. The city wall surrounded the entire settlement of the time and there was no need or reason to build an additional defense wall separating the City of David from the South-West Hill. We can safely assume that a city wall was not built here after the Middle Bronze Age.

The archaeological evidence from the northwestern end of the City of David, from the areas bordering on the southwestern corner of the Haram esh-Sherif, supports this view. The entire area was excavated down to bedrock by B. Mazar, and no remains of a First Temple Period city wall were detected. Several rock-cut caves, possibly tombs or cisterns, were discovered by B. Mazar on the eastern slope of the South-West Hill (fig. 1:6).²⁴ B. Mazar raised the possibility that this was a cemetery dating to the earlier part of the First Temple Period, to the time when this area had still been situated outside the boundaries of the settlement. Theoretically, a graveyard such as this could have indicated that the boundary of the city had extended at that time along the northwestern side of the City of David, but the factual data are vague and problematic. It is not clear whether these caves were originally cut as tombs and what is their date,²⁵ and we cannot use these data in our evaluation.

The archaeological evidence from the western section of the City of David is partial. In 1927, Crowfoot excavated a wide trench, oriented from east to west, across the Tyropoeon Valley (fig. 1:5).²⁶ A massive structure was uncovered at the lower edge of the western slope of the City of David. Detailed descriptions, a ground plan, a section, and several photographs of the structure were published by Crowfoot.²⁷ He identified it as a gatehouse constructed in the Bronze Age and used till the Roman period. Ever since its discovery, it has generally been agreed that this structure was a gatehouse in the western wall of the city of David, and it plays a prominent part in all suggested reconstructions of

24. See B. Mazar 1971: 22–23; E. Mazar and B. Mazar 1989: 49–55.

25. See Barkay 1985: 474–75.

26. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929.

27. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 12–26; frontispiece, pls. 1–4, 22.

biblical Jerusalem and its fortifications. In my view, analysis of the data indicates that this is probably a massive substructure of a large edifice that was not preserved. The construction of this sort of substructure was necessary in view of the steep slope and narrowness of the ravine at this spot. It appears that the structure postdates the Persian period.

Figure 4 presents Crowfoot's ground plan and section of the excavated remains. Two structures oriented to the northwest belong to the uppermost level and date to the Byzantine period; hence, they are irrelevant to us. The underlying "gatehouse" is based on bedrock and includes two "gate towers" (labeled "Oldest Walls" in fig. 4). The "gate-passage" can be observed between the "gate towers"; it is oriented from west to east and is ca. 3.5 m wide (no. 42 in fig. 4). Crowfoot uncovered the back corner of the northern "gate tower" beneath the overlying Byzantine building; the "gate tower" is thus ca. 8.4 m thick. As for the southern "gate tower"—all of its 19 m-long facade was exposed, but its back side remained unexcavated. Adjacent to the facade of the "gatehouse" were found other, narrower walls, labeled "Later pre-Byzantine Walls" in fig. 4; they are termed here "additional walls." The "additional walls" are built against the walls of the "gatehouse" and include a wall blocking the "gate passage" and a long wall built in parallel to the facade of the "gate towers." The "additional walls," based as well on bedrock, rise as high as the walls of the gatehouse, that is, about 7 m or more, and their orientation also fits that of the "gatehouse" exactly. However, their style of construction differs from the "gatehouse." Crowfoot believed that the "additional walls" were added in the Late Roman period.

The accompanying section (fig. 4) extends across the Tyropoeon Valley from side to side, facing north. Bedrock is shown at the bottom by broken lines. The northern "gate tower" is shown at right and parallel to it the 'additional' wall. Both structures are based on the sloping bedrock and were preserved to a height of 6–7 m, reaching the same elevation; the overlying Byzantine building is shown above them.

Figure 5 shows the front corner of the northern "gate tower," which contained large, square-shaped blocks, some of which measure more than 1.3 m. On the right side can be seen the sloping bedrock in the "gate passage." In the wall of the "gate tower" to the left of the standing man the entire upper course of stones projects from the line of the wall into the "gate passage."

Figure 6 shows the "gate-passage" between the two "gate towers" after the removal of the "additional wall" that blocked it. On the right can be seen one of the "additional walls" built against the corner of the "gate tower." This "additional wall" exactly fits the corner and the

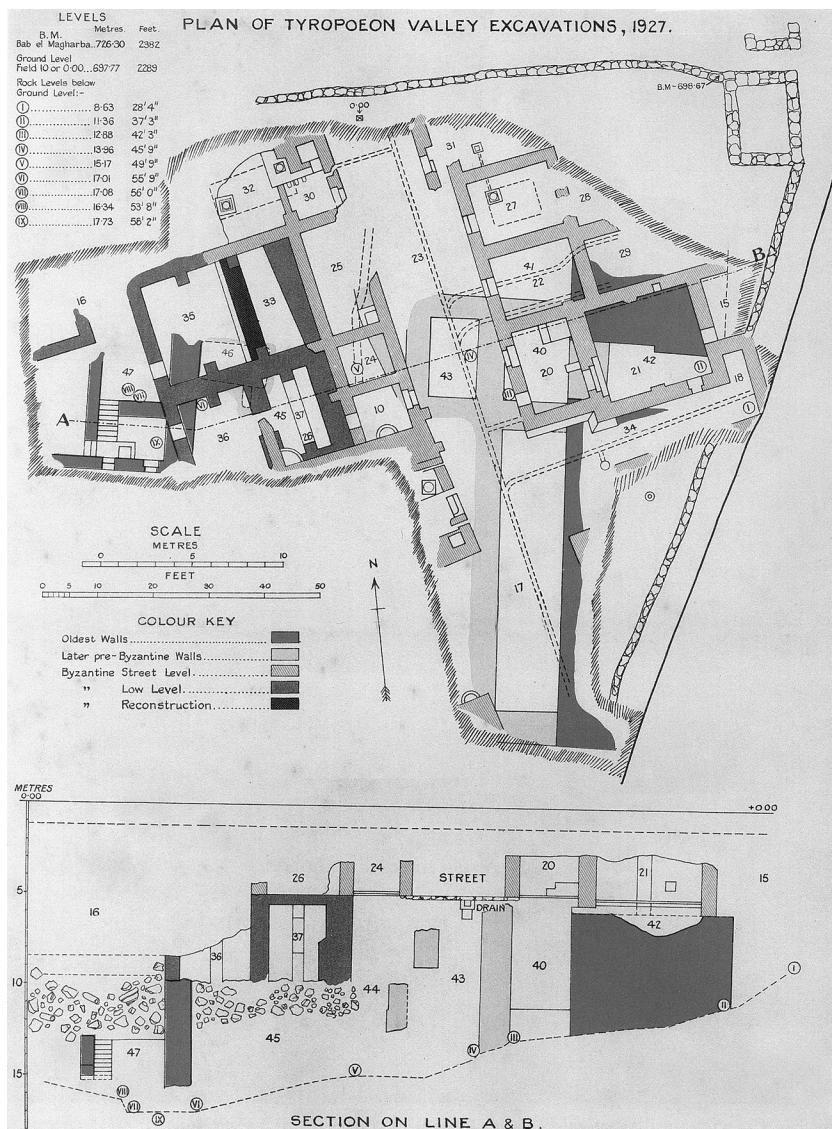


Figure 4. Crowfoot's excavations in the Central Valley, plan and section (after Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: pl. 22).



Figure 5. The “gatehouse” uncovered by Crowfoot: the gate passage and northern tower, from the southwest (after Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: pl. 1).

orientation of the “gate tower”; both of them were preserved to the same height, but their style of construction differs.

Even before the beginning of the excavation, Crowfoot assumed that the city wall of the ancient periods must have passed here. Thus, he wrote in the introduction to the report: “it was hoped that in the course of this excavation we might find traces of the west wall of David’s city.”²⁸

Based on this assumption (and biased by it), he reached the following conclusions on the structure he uncovered:

At first . . . we were inclined to attribute the towers to the Maccabaeon period, but it soon became obvious that though the towers contained Maccabaeon work, the plan of the gate was very much more ancient. The masonry of different parts of the walls varies . . . and it is plain that they have been patched and repaired in the course of time, like most other city walls; but the mere dimensions prove . . . that our walls belong in origin to a much earlier age. . . . Walls like ours which measure more than 27 feet [i.e., ca. 9 m] in thickness are

28. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 3.



Figure 6. The “gatehouse” uncovered by Crowfoot, after the removal of the “additional” wall built across the “gate-passage.” Note one of the “additional” walls at the right; from the northwest (after Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: frontispiece).

characteristic of the very early days before lime-mortar was used. . . . If a gateway of this type had been found on a hill where nothing else of the Bronze Age was known to exist, few archaeologists would have hesitated to refer it to this period, or, at latest, to the Early Iron Age.²⁹

Characteristic of city gates in the Levant during the Bronze and Iron Ages is a two-chambered, four-chambered, or six-chambered gatehouse, and this model has nothing in common with Crowfoot's so-called gate. The position of the structure at the bottom of the steep slope of the City of David, inside the deep ravine, also lacks any topographical logic for the location of a city-gate.

Several data indicate that the so-called gatehouse was in fact a sub-structure mostly covered by a construction fill. One can also assume that the “additional walls” belong to the original structure, although their style of construction differs. The fact that the “gate towers” and

29. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 17; see also Crowfoot 1927: 183.

the “additional walls” were preserved to the unusual height of ca. 6 m or more, the sloping bedrock in the “gate-passage,” the badly constructed wall of the “gate tower” with its projecting stone blocks, the fact that all units created by the “gate towers” and the “additional walls” lack any floors or openings—all are indications that the so-called gatehouse was merely a substructure.

On the other hand, one datum contradicts the conclusion that the entire fill was laid at the time when the structure was built. A hoard containing 319 coins, mostly dated to the time of Alexander Jannaeus, was discovered in the earthen fill in front of the southern “gate tower.”³⁰ This hoard appears to be a cache, although a container in which the coins had been placed was not discovered, and although not all the coins were found together: Crowfoot states that “the greater part” of the coins—so not all of them—were found “close to the south wall of Room 40,” which is one of the “additional walls” built against the southern “gate tower” (fig. 4).³¹ The “cache” was found at elevation 10.80 m below the surface,³² that is, 1.50–2 m above bedrock. However, in the preliminary excavation report it is stated that the coins were uncovered “a little more than a metre above the rock.”³³

One can assume that the cache—if indeed it was a cache—was buried not deeper than 1 m from the surface of the time. It would follow—on the basis of this datum—that the floor surface of the time in front of the “gatehouse” extended at 2–3 m above bedrock. However, this conclusion contradicts all other data, as I discussed above.

In conclusion, it is difficult to determine the character of the structure. It seems that the so-called gatehouse and the “additional walls” were concurrently constructed in the deep ravine as a substructure for a building that was not preserved. One way or other, it seems clear that the structure was not a gatehouse as suggested by Crowfoot.

The report on the pottery and other finds was prepared by Fitzgerald. The pottery and finds from the fills above the elevation of the top of the gatehouse walls date to the Late Roman, Byzantine, and later periods.³⁴ The lower part of the fills contained Iron Age pottery from the 8th and 7th centuries B.C.E, of the types typical to Lachish Levels III and II, a few fragmentary figurines from this period, and Hellenistic-period

30. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 15, 19, 103–5.

31. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 19.

32. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 15.

33. Crowfoot 1927: 180.

34. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 73–101, pls. 13–17.

pottery.³⁵ The Iron Age pottery was possibly embedded in the fills of the structure, but it could also have belonged to the debris antedating the fills at the bottom of the ravine, accumulated here when this area was part of the 8th- and 7th-century city. Both the Hellenistic-period pottery and the Alexander Jannaeus coins cache hint that these fills, and therefore the adjoining walls of the structure, date not earlier than the 1st century B.C.E. or 1st century C.E.

Two more excavations at the western side of the City of David and the Tyropoeon Valley must be mentioned. Kenyon made three soundings here—Sites K, M and N—but no remains of city walls dated to the Bronze and Iron Ages have been detected.³⁶ Since 2007, another large-scale excavation has been carried out by Reich and Shukron and then by Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority in the area of the planned “Giv’ati” parking lot, a short distance to the north of Crowfoot’s dig. The excavation reached the steep sloping bedrock at the western edge of the City of David, where one would expect a city wall protecting this side of the hill to extend. However, only domestic remains have been uncovered here, dated to the Iron IIA period and later.³⁷

To end the discussion on the question of a possible city wall extending along the western side of the City of David: It seems clear that when the large city that had emerged in the 8th century B.C.E. was surrounded by a wall, this wall extended around the entire settled area. Hence, there was no need to build a separate wall around the City of David that at that time became merely one quarter in a larger city. We can safely assume that no city wall was built along its western side, which faced the Tyropoeon Valley, after the end of the Middle Bronze II period.

Significantly, the archaeological evidence is partial, because most of this region has not been excavated. Nevertheless, the finds from the fields thus far explored support the above conclusion, which has been based on the archaeological finds from other parts of the city.

Persian-Period Jerusalem

Very few remains of the Persian period have been uncovered in the various excavations carried out in different parts of the South-West Hill—the Jewish Quarter, the Armenian Quarter, Mount Zion, and the

35. Crowfoot and Fitzgerald 1929: 66–72, pls. 11–12.

36. See Kenyon 1974: 93 and fig. 18.

37. See Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2010.

Ottoman Citadel, and it is generally agreed that the settlement during the Persian period was concentrated in, or confined to, the City of David (and the Temple Mount). This view was well expressed by Avigad:

In the other, more significant matter, our excavations in the Jewish Quarter supplied unequivocal data, although of a completely negative nature. In all our excavations at many different spots, it has become clear beyond any doubt that the Western Hill was entirely unoccupied during the Persian period, the period of the Return from Exile. We have discovered here neither structures of this period nor pottery (except for a few isolated sherds). Further, in the excavations conducted within the citadel, in the Armenian Quarter, and on Mount Zion, the only evidence from the Persian Period which has come to light is a single *Yehud* coin of the 4th century B.C.

This conclusion is not especially surprising, and can readily be explained by the fact that the relatively few exiles returning were not capable of repopulating and restoring the extensive, desolate quarter on the Western Hill. The smaller City of David was more than sufficient for their needs. . . . From all the above we can conclude that the . . . settlement in Jerusalem in the period of the Return to Zion . . . was limited to the narrow confines of the City of David, and that the *Mishneh* on the Western Hill remained desolate and uninhabited.³⁸

All the relevant archaeological data have recently been studied in depth and summarized by Finkelstein.³⁹ Based on his analysis, the settlement in Jerusalem during the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods was limited to the City of David and “was confined to the central part of the ridge . . . with the eastern slope outside the built-up area.”⁴⁰ He adds that “even in this restricted area, a century of excavations, by a number of archaeologists, failed to yield even a single(!) house or proper floor from the Persian period.”⁴¹

Finkelstein estimates that the settled area during these periods (not including the Temple Mount) was about 20–25 dunams. Based on a coefficient of 25 people per inhabited dunam, this being the density coefficient used by Stager and by Broshi and Finkelstein⁴² in their respective studies on the Philistine and later Iron II population of the country, about 625 people lived here. In the above study, Finkelstein⁴³ reaches

38. Avigad 1983: 62.

39. Finkelstein 2008: 504–7.

40. Finkelstein 2008: 506.

41. Finkelstein 2008: 506.

42. Stager 1995: 344; Broshi and Finkelstein 1992: 48.

43. Finkelstein 2008: 506–7.

the number of 400–500 people, based on a coefficient of 20 people per inhabited dunam.

The above archaeological evidence is well illustrated in the verses discussing the population of Jerusalem in the book of Nehemiah: “The city was large and spacious; there were few people in it and no houses had yet been rebuilt” (Neh 7:4), and “the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem; and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one in every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine lived in other towns. And the people were grateful to all those who volunteered to live in Jerusalem” (Neh 11:1–2).

Kenyon believed that the city wall extending at midslope on the eastern side of the City of David was abandoned following the 586 B.C.E. destruction and that a new city wall was erected by Nehemiah in the Persian period along the crest of the ridge.⁴⁴ In her Square A XVIII, she identified a wall segment—which formed part of the later-in-date wall line discovered at the time by Macalister and Duncan—as belonging to this assumed city wall. The dating of the wall segment was based on Persian period material found in debris laid or dumped against the foot of the wall. This suggestion was adopted by Shiloh and others.⁴⁵ In the excavation of Area G on the lower part of the slope, Shiloh discovered remains of the Persian period—pottery and seal impressions—which he associated with an extramural suburb built outside this wall line.⁴⁶

Recently, E. Mazar dated the “Northern Tower”—another segment of the city wall uncovered by Macalister and Duncan and situated near Kenyon’s wall segment in Square A XVIII—as belonging to Nehemiah’s city wall.⁴⁷ The redating of the “Northern Tower” was based on Persian-period finds uncovered in the debris layers beneath its foundations.

In the cases of both Kenyon’s and E. Mazar’s wall segments, there are no stratigraphic reasons to date them to the Persian period. Finkelstein, Steiner, and I have reached this conclusion.⁴⁸ As for the debris layers containing Persian-period finds laid against the foot of the wall uncovered by Kenyon, they originate elsewhere and could have been dumped there at any time after the erection of the wall. As for the debris layers containing Persian-period finds beneath the wall segment uncovered by E. Mazar—they merely indicate that the wall was erected

44. Kenyon 1974: 183–87, fig. 28.

45. Shiloh 1984: 29; see also, e.g., Stern 2001: 435.

46. Shiloh 1984: 20, 29.

47. E. Mazar 2007b: 18–21; 2009: 72–79.

48. Ussishkin 2006: 160; Finkelstein 2008: 507–9; 2009: 6–7; Steiner 2011.

at a date later than the finds. Also the text of Nehemiah (which forms the starting point for Kenyon's and E. Mazar's argumentation) does not say or hint that Nehemiah abandoned the convenient fortification line extending down the slope, that he erected a new fortification line along the upper part of the slope, or that he deliberately left an important suburb of the small settlement extramural.

The City Wall of Nehemiah

Taking into consideration all the archaeological data presented above, we should now turn to the question of the rebuilding of the city wall by Nememiah (Neh 3:1–32). There are in fact three options for understanding the reality behind the written text that are based on the archaeological background and data as summarized above:

1. The biblical story refers to Jerusalem in the Late Hellenistic, that is, Hasmonean period, when the city walls were rebuilt, as has recently been suggested by Finkelstein.⁴⁹
2. The biblical story refers to the restoration of the city wall that surrounded the City of David and the Temple Mount during the First Temple Period, as the “minimalists” asserted.
3. The biblical story refers to the restoration of the city wall that surrounded the City of David, the Temple Mount, and the South-West Hill during the First Temple period, as the “maximalists” asserted.

We shall now discuss each of the three options, in this order.

First Option: Late Hellenistic Period

This possibility has recently been raised by Finkelstein.⁵⁰ Analyzing the archaeological data of Persian-period Jerusalem, Finkelstein concluded that “there is no archaeological evidence for the city wall of Nehemiah” and that “archaeologically, Nehemiah's wall is a *mirage*.”⁵¹ As he explains, there were three fortification systems in Jerusalem that might be relevant to the problem of Nehemiah's wall—in the Middle Bronze Age, in Iron II B–C, and during the Late Hellenistic period. In Finkelstein's view “the description was inspired by the construction of

49. Finkelstein 2008.

50. Finkelstein 2008.

51. Finkelstein 2008: 509.

the Late Hellenistic, Hasmonean city wall,"⁵² and the text refers to that wall.

A cardinal, in fact, unsurmountable difficulty for accepting this suggestion is derived from the detailed description of the course of Nehemiah's wall in Neh 3:1–32, complimented by the account of his nightly reconnaissance tour in Neh 2:12–15 and the thanksgiving procession upon the completion of the wall in Neh 12:31–40: Many of the mentioned toponyms relate to Jerusalem of the First Temple Period and not to the later Second-Temple-Period city whose layout differed from that of the earlier city.

First and foremost was the situation on the Temple Mount. During the First Temple Period, the royal acropolis of the kings of the House of David, which included the Temple and the royal palace, was situated on the Temple Mount.⁵³ The palace must have been situated not far from the part of the city wall that protected the Temple Mount. By the time of the Second Temple, only the Temple complex was situated here, and the general layout must have been affected by the construction of the problematic nearby Acra—apparently the citadel of the city in the Hellenistic period. As we can gather from Josephus, the new royal palace erected by the Hasmonean kings was situated in the Upper City, that is, on the South-West hill, facing the southwestern part of the Temple Mount (*Ant.* 15:410; *J. W.* 2:344).

The following three toponyms situated in the Temple Mount area well reflect the above difficulty.

Bēyt hamelek hā'elyôn, "the upper king's house" (Neh 3:25), apparently was part of the royal palace situated near the temple in the First Temple Period.

Hāšar hamatārâ, "the court of the prison" (Neh 3:25), apparently was a prison complex attached to the royal palace.⁵⁴ It is mentioned during Zedekiah's reign in Jer 32:2, 8, 12; 33:1; 37:21; 38:6, 13, 28; 39:14–15, but not in later sources. It can be assumed that *sha'ar hamatārâ*, "the gate of the prison," mentioned in Neh 12:39, refers to the same complex.

Sha'ar hasûsîm, "the horse gate" (Neh 3:28), apparently was located in the area of the temple and the royal palace of the First Temple Period.⁵⁵ It is mentioned in 2 Kgs 11:16 and in 2 Chr 23:15 as *mēvô' hasûsîm*, "the

52. Finkelstein 2008: 511.

53. See Ussishkin 2009.

54. See Vincent and Steve 1954: 247.

55. See Simons 1952: 338–40; Avi-Yonah 1954: 247.

horses' entrance," or as *mēvô' sha'ar hasûsîm*, "the entrance of the horse gate," with regard to the execution of Athaliah and in Jer 31:39 in association with the Kidron Valley.

Other toponyms located outside the Temple Mount also indicate that the biblical text refers to Jerusalem of the First Temple Period. I will mention two of them, located in the City of David.

Gan hamelek, "the king's garden" (Neh 3:15), was apparently a royal park situated near the southern end of the City of David and watered by the conduits of the Gihon Spring. It is mentioned with reference to Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the city in 586 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 25:4; Jer 39:4, 52:7) but not in later sources.⁵⁶ It can be assumed that *brehat hamelek*, "the king's pool," mentioned in Neh 2:14 was associated with this park.

Qibrê Dāwîd, "the sepulchres of David," that is, "the sepulchres of the house of David" (Neh 3:16), the burial ground of the kings of the House of David, in which the earlier kings of the dynasty were buried, is mentioned several times.⁵⁷ It must have been a well-known landmark in Jerusalem of the First Temple Period. The later kings of the dynasty were buried elsewhere in Gan Uza. Although David's tomb is referred to in later sources (e.g., Josephus in *J. W.* 1:61; *Ant.* 7:393–94, 13:249, 16:179–83), it is doubtful whether the location of the site was still known in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Second Option: The "Minimalist" View

This possibility is advocated by the majority of scholars, notably Avi-Yonah, Tsafrir, Avigad, Williamson, Eshel, Stern, Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, Geva, and recently Steiner and Na'aman.⁵⁸ Tsafrir's suggested reconstruction is reproduced here in figure 7.

The methodological starting point of both "minimalists" and "maximalists" for the reconstruction of Nehemiah's city wall has always been the line of the earlier Judahite, preexilic city wall. This starting point was well defined by Avi-Yonah:

It is generally agreed that the line of the city wall at the time of Nehemiah is identical to that during the end of the Monarchy period. Nehemiah himself defines his task as repair rather than rebuilding of

56. See Ussishkin 1995: 300–301.

57. See, e.g., Simons 1952: 194–225; Vincent and Steve 1954: 313–23; Barkay 1977.

58. See Avi-Yonah 1954; 1956; Tsafrir 1977; Avigad 1983: 61–62; Williamson 1984; Eshel 2000; Stern 2001: 434–36; Ritmeyer and Ritmeyer 2005; Geva 2006; Steiner 2011; Na'aman 2010: 172.

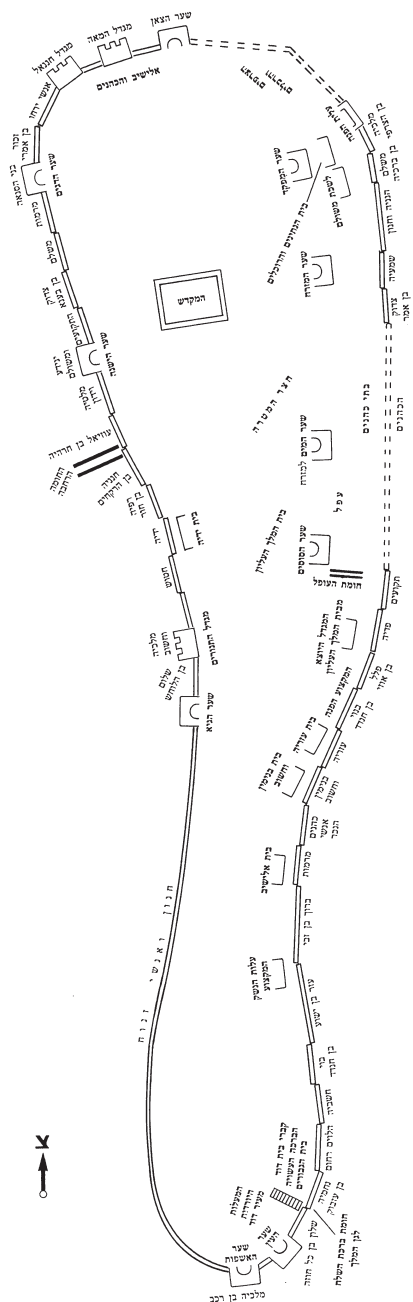


Figure 7. Suggested reconstruction of Jerusalem in the Persian period based on the “minimalist” view (after Tsafir 1977: illustration 4).

the wall. . . . We can therefore rely on the description of Nehemiah for the reconstruction of the wall as a continuation from the period before the First Destruction.⁵⁹

Avi-Yonah was a “minimalist” in his view of the size of biblical Jerusalem⁶⁰ and therefore reconstructed Nehemiah’s city wall along “minimalist” lines, assuming that this wall had surrounded only the City of David and the Temple Mount.

The above methodological principle modified once the Judahite city wall surrounding the South-West Hill was discovered by Avigad and once it became clear that this large suburb was hardly inhabited during the Persian period. It is now assumed by the “minimalists” that Nehemiah restored the city wall surrounding the City of David and the Temple Mount, ignoring and discarding the city wall surrounding the now-uninhabited South-West Hill.

The “minimalists” (for example, Tsafir and Eshel) assume that the City of David was fortified also on its western side by Solomon, and so this wall could be restored by Nehemiah. However, as argued above, it is clear that the western side of the City of David—and most likely only the southern part of the western side as shown in figure 2—was fortified during the Middle Bronze II period but not in later periods. Therefore, Nehemiah could have not restored the city wall along this line as assumed by the “minimalists.”

Geva believes that, along the western side of the City of David, Nehemiah restored the Middle Bronze wall that continued to be in use till the late 8th century B.C.E.⁶¹ In his own words, “it would probably be a wall of massive proportions . . . certainly used in one form or another, with repairs and additions, through the Late Bronze and Iron Ages.”⁶² However, as argued above, the Middle Bronze II city wall most likely fell into disuse and was mostly demolished at the end of the period and could have hardly been “resurrected” by Nehemiah.

Two more issues should be discussed in brief here. First, in following the identification by Crowfoot in 1927 of the “gatehouse” situated in the Tyropoeon Valley, this “city gate” was identified by Albright as the “dung gate” (*sha‘ar ha’ashpoth*) and by Alt as the “valley gate” (*sha‘ar haggai*),⁶³ both mentioned in Nehemiah’s descriptions. While Albright’s

59. Avi-Yonah 1956: 160.

60. Avi-Yonah 1956.

61. Geva 2006: 67–68.

62. Geva 2006: 67.

63. Albright 1930–31: 167; Alt 1928.

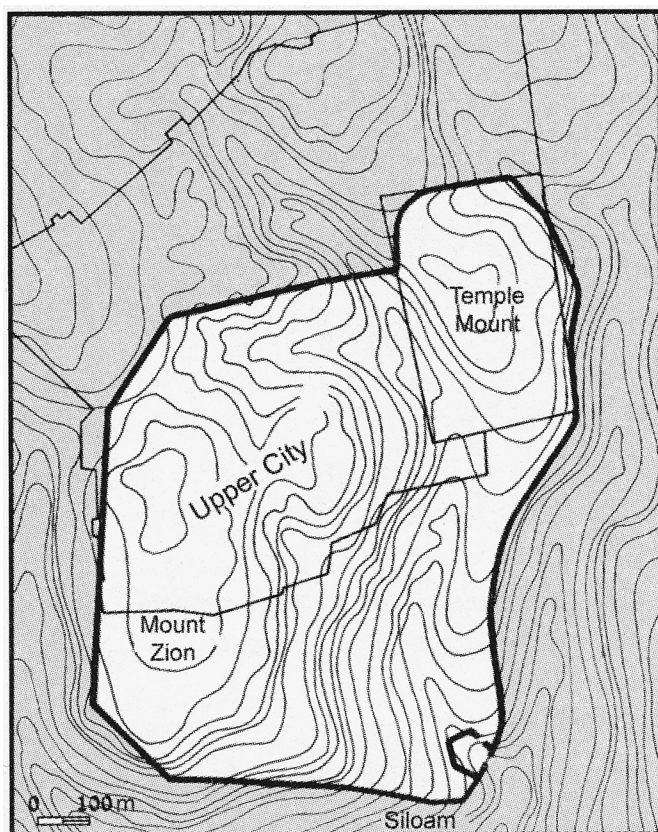


Figure 8. Suggested reconstruction of Jerusalem in the Persian period based on the "maximalist" view (after Ben-Dov 2002: 87, fig. 3).

suggestion has almost been forgotten, Alt's identification of this structure with *sha'ar haggai* has generally been adopted by the "minimalists," for example, Avi-Yonah, Tsafirir, and Eshel.⁶⁴ However, once it is accepted that the structure excavated by Crowfoot is not a gatehouse, this identification falls through. Significantly, the name of this gate also makes it difficult to locate it in the Tyropoeon Valley. The sole valley in the Jerusalem area defined as *Gai* is *Gei Ben-Hinnom*, the Hinnom Valley, which is generally identified with the ravine encompassing 8th–7th

64. Avi-Yonah 1954: 244–45; 1956: 162, map 9; Tsafirir 1977: 39; Eshel 2000: 333 and n. 30, fig. 1.

century Jerusalem along its southern and southwestern boundary (fig. 1:9). It makes much more sense, therefore, to reconstruct the valley gate along the Hinnom Valley, as suggested by the “maximalists,” for example, Simons and Vincent.⁶⁵

The second issue, discussed by Ben-Dov,⁶⁶ relates to the position and number of the city gates. In every walled city, the city gate forms a weak point in the defense line. Therefore, the smaller cities of the biblical period, such as Megiddo and Lachish, had only a single city gate. The larger cities, such as Bronze Age Hazor and Ebla, naturally had several city gates located along several parts of the city wall. Jerusalem of the 8th–7th centuries B.C.E., spread across several hills, must have had a few city gates situated in different parts of the city wall at a fair distance from one another.

This problem becomes evident in the reconstructions of the city based on the “minimalist” conception, for example, Tsafrir’s reconstruction reproduced here in figure 7. About 10 city gates are mentioned in the book of Nehemiah. It is generally assumed that some of them were inner gates of the temple’s compound. Still, at least six or seven gates have to be reconstructed here, some of them in close proximity to one another (fig. 7). Such a great number of gates would better fit a larger city, as suggested by the “maximalists,” as the gates would then be located at a reasonable distance from one another.

Third Option: The “Maximalist” View

This possibility was advocated by several scholars, notably Vincent, Simons, Ben-Dov, and recently Knauf.⁶⁷ According to this concept (see fig. 8), the biblical text describes the restoration by Nehemiah of the Judahite city wall, which faced the Babylonian army in 586 B.C.E. This means that the biblical text describes the city wall that encompassed the City of David, the Temple Mount, and the South-West Hill. This, in my view, is the only way to understand the text and relate it to the archaeological evidence.

However, there is one grave difficulty in an interpretation such as this—the fact, as proven by the archaeological evidence—that Jerusalem of the Persian period was a small and poor settlement limited to the central part of the City of David. Based on the assumption that the biblical text describes historical events of the Persian period, as is generally

65. Simons 1952: 443, fig. 56; Vincent and Steve 1954: pl. 61.

66. See Ben-Dov 2002: 84–88.

67. See Vincent and Steve 1954: 237–59, pl. 61; Simons 1952: 437–58; Ben-Dov 2002: 64–88; Knauf 2011: 186–87.

accepted, we must conclude that some repair work was carried out by Nehemiah in the still-standing old Judahite city wall surrounding the city, which was largely abandoned at that time.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the above, one can reconstruct the history of Jerusalem in the Persian period as follows. Following the Babylonian conquest of 586 B.C.E., the city was largely destroyed and its population depleted. Nehemiah found the city mostly abandoned with its old, massive city walls still standing but partly damaged or destroyed. In an effort to revive Jerusalem, he first turned to restore the city walls. This action—as pointed out to me by Knauf—had first and foremost been a national and political act, rather than an act of purely military character. Quite possibly, the construction work was no more than symbolic, and so it is not surprising that it has not been detected by archaeological research.⁶⁸ The plan to revive and resettle the large city failed, and most of its old quarters remained uninhabited, while the population concentrated around the central part of the City of David and the area of the Temple Mount. This was probably the appearance of the city encountered by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.E., and it remained so till its period of renewed prosperity, which began in the Late Hellenistic period, in the 2nd century B.C.E.

References

- Albright, W. F.
 1930–31 Excavations at Jerusalem. *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 21: 163–68.
 Alt, A.
 1928 Das Taltor von Jerusalem. *Palästina-jahrbuch* 24: 74–98.
 Avigad, N.
 1983 *Discovering Jerusalem*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
 Avigad, N., and Geva, H.
 2000 Iron Age Strata 9–7. Pp. 44–82 in *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem*, vol. 1: *Architecture and Stratigraphy: Areas A, W and X-2, Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
 Avi-Yonah, M.
 1954 The Walls of Nehemiah: A Minimalist View. *Israel Exploration Journal* 4: 239–48.
 1956 Topography of Jerusalem in the Monarchy Period. Pp. 156–68 in vol. 1 of *Sepher Yerushalayim (The Book of Jerusalem)*, ed. M. Avi-Yonah. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute / Tel Aviv: Dvir. [Hebrew]

68. Contra Geva 2006: 68.

- Barkay, G.
 1977 On the Problem of the Burial Place of the Later Kings of the House of David. Pp. 75–92 in *Between Hermon and Sinai: Memorial to Amnon*, ed. M. Broshi. Jerusalem: n.p. [Hebrew].
 1985 *Northern and Western Jerusalem in the End of the Iron Age*. Ph.D. dissertation. Tel Aviv University. [Hebrew]
- Ben-Ami, D., and Tchekhanovets, Y.
 2010 The Extent of Jerusalem during the Iron Age IIA. Pp. 67–73 in *New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region*, ed. D. Amit, O. Peleg-Barkat and G. D. Stiebel. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority. [Hebrew]
- Ben-Dov, M.
 2002 *Historical Atlas of Jerusalem*. New York: Continuum.
- Broshi, M., and Finkelstein, I.
 1992 The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 287: 47–60.
- Cahill, J. M.
 2003 Jerusalem at the time of the United Monarchy: The Archaeological Evidence. Pp. 13–80 in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, ed. A. G. Vaughn and A. E. Killebrew. Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Crowfoot, J. W.
 1927 Second Report of the Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley. *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*: 178–83.
- Crowfoot, J. W., and Fitzgerald, G. M.
 1929 *Excavations in the Tyropoeon Valley, Jerusalem 1927*. Palestine Exploration Fund Annual 1927. London: Palestine Exploration Fund.
- Eshel, H.
 2000 Jerusalem under Persian Rule: The City's Layout and the Historical Background. Pp. 327–43 in *The History of Jerusalem: The Biblical Period*, ed. S. Ahituv and A. Mazar. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi. [Hebrew]
- Faust, A.
 2010 The Large Stone Structure in the City of David. *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 126: 116–30.
- Finkelstein, I.
 2008 Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32: 501–20.
 2009 Persian Period Jerusalem and Yehud: A Rejoinder. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9: article 24.
 2011 The “Large Stone Structure” in Jerusalem. *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 127: 1–10.
- Finkelstein, I.; Herzog, Z.; Singer-Avitz, L.; and Ussishkin, D.
 2007 Has King David's Palace in Jerusalem Been Found? *Tel Aviv* 34: 142–64.

- Finkelstein, I.; Koch, I.; and Lipschits, O.
 2011 The Mound on the Mount: A Possible Solution to the "Problem with Jerusalem." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 11: article 12.
- Franken, H. J., and Steiner, M. L.
 1990 *Excavations in Jerusalem 1961–1967*, vol. 2: *The Iron Age External Quarter on the South-East Hill*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Geva, H.
 1979 The Western Boundary of Jerusalem at the End of the Monarchy. *Israel Exploration Journal* 29: 84–91.
 1983 Excavations in the Citadel of Jerusalem, 1979–1980. *Israel Exploration Journal* 33: 55–71.
 2006 Small City, Few People. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 32/3: 66–68.
- Geva, H., and Avigad, N.
 2000 Area W: Stratigraphy and Architecture. Pp. 131–97 in *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem*, vol. 1: *Architecture and Stratigraphy: Areas A, W and X-2, Final Report*, ed. H. Geva. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Kenyon, K. M.
 1963 Excavations in Jerusalem, 1962. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 95: 7–21.
 1964 Excavations in Jerusalem, 1963. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 96: 7–18.
 1968 Excavations in Jerusalem, 1967. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 100: 97–109.
 1974 *Digging Up Jerusalem*. London: Benn.
- King, P. J., and Stager, L. E.
 2001 *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Kloner, A.
 1984 Rehov Hagay. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 3: 57–59.
- Knauf, E. A.
 2000 *Jerusalem in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages: A Proposal*. Tel Aviv 27: 75–90.
 2011 Inside the Walls of Nehemiah's Jerusalem: Naboth's Vineyard. Pp. 185–94 in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, ed. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Macalister, R. A. S., and Duncan, J. G.
 1926 *Excavations on the Hill of Ophel, Jerusalem 1923–1925*. Palestine Exploration Fund Annual 1923–25. London: Palestine Exploration Fund.
- Mazar, A.
 1990 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10,000–586 B.C.E.* New York: Doubleday.
 2006 Jerusalem in the 10th Century B.C.E.: The Glass Half Full. Pp. 255–72 in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav*

- Na'aman, ed. Y. Amit, E. Ben Zvi, I. Finkelstein, and O. Lipschits. Wiconna Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- 2010 Archaeology and the Biblical Narrative: The Case of the United Monarchy. Pp. 29–58 in *One God – One Cult – One Nation. Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives*, ed. R. G. Kratz and H. Spieckermann. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 405. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Mazar, B.
- 1971 The Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Near the Temple Mount: Second Preliminary Report, 1969–70 Seasons. *Eretz Israel* 10: 1–33. [Hebrew]
- Mazar, E.
- 2006 The Fortifications of Jerusalem in the Second Millennium B.C.E. in Light of the New Excavations in the City of David. Pp. 21–28 in vol. 12 of *New Studies on Jerusalem*, ed. E. Baruch and A. Faust. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press. [Hebrew]
- 2007a *Preliminary Report on the City of David Excavations 2005 at the Visitors Center Area*. Jerusalem: Shalem Press.
- 2007b Excavations at the City of David (2006–2007). Pp. 7–26 in vol. 13 of *New Studies on Jerusalem*, ed. E. Baruch, E. Levy-Reifer, and A. Faust. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press. [Hebrew]
- 2009 *The Palace of King David. Excavations at the Summit of the City of David. Preliminary Report of Seasons 2006–2007*. Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication.
- 2011 *Discovering the Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem: A Remarkable Archaeological Adventure*. Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication.
- Mazar, E., and Mazar, B.
- 1989 *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem*. Qedem 29. Jerusalem: Hebrew University–Institute of Archaeology.
- Na'aman, N.
- 2010 Does Archaeology Really Deserve the Status of a ‘High Court’ in Biblical Historical Research? Pp. 165–83 in *Between Evidence and Ideology: Essays on the History of Ancient Israel Read at the Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the Oud Testamentisch Werkgezeischap Lincoln, July 2009*, ed. B. Becking and L. L. Grabbe. Oudtestamentische Studien 59. Leiden: Brill.
- Reich, R.
- 2011 *Excavating the City of David: Where Jerusalem’s History Began*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Reich, R., and Shukron, E.
- 1999 Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 109: 77*–78*.
- 2000a Jerusalem, the Gihon Spring. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 20: 99*–100*, figs. 178–79.

- 2000b Jerusalem, City of David. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 112: 82*-83*, figs. 150-51.
- 2008 The Date of City Wall 501 in Jerusalem. *Tel Aviv* 35: 114-22.
- 2010 A New Segment of the Middle Bronze Fortification in the City of David. *Tel Aviv* 37: 141-53.
- Reich, R.; Shukron, E.; and Lerna, O.
 2007 Recent Discoveries in the City of David, Jerusalem. *Israel Exploration Journal* 57: 153-69.
- Ritmeyer, L., and Ritmeyer, K.
 2005 *Jerusalem in the Time of Nehemiah*. Jerusalem: Carta.
- Shanks, H.
 1995 *Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography*. New York: Random House.
- Shiloh, Y.
 1984 *Excavations at the City of David I. 1978-1982: Interim Report of the First Five Seasons*. Qedem 19. Jerusalem: Hebrew University-Institute of Archaeology.
- 1985a Notes and News: Jerusalem, City of David, 1984. *Israel Exploration Journal* 35: 65-67.
- 1985b Notes and News: Jerusalem, City of David, 1985. *Israel Exploration Journal* 35: 301-3.
- Simons, J.
 1952 *Jerusalem in the Old Testament, Researches and Theories*. Leiden: Brill.
- Stager, L. E.
 1995 The Impact of the Sea Peoples in Canaan (1185-1050 B.C.E.). Pp. 332-48 in *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, ed. T. E. Levy. New York: Facts on File.
- Steiner, M. L.
 2001 *Excavations by Kathleen M. Kenyon in Jerusalem 1961-1967*, vol. 3: *The Settlement in the Bronze and Iron Ages*. Copenhagen International Series 9. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- 2011 The Persian Period City Wall of Jerusalem. Pp. 307-15 in *The Fire Signals of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, ed. I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Stern, E.
 2001 *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian Periods 732-332 BCE*. New York: Doubleday.
- Tsafrir, Y.
 1977 The Walls of Jerusalem in the Period of Nehemiah. *Cathedra* 4: 31-42. [Hebrew]
- Ussishkin, D.
 1995 The Water Systems of Jerusalem during Hezekiah's Reign. Pp. 289-307 in *Meilenstein: Festgabe für Herbert Donner*, ed. M. Weippert and S. Timm. Ägypten und Altes Testament 30. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- 2003a Solomon's Jerusalem: The Text and the Facts on the Ground. Pp. 103-15 in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, ed.

- A. G. Vaughn, and A. E. Killebrew. Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- 2003b Jerusalem as a Royal and Cultic Center in the 10th–8th Centuries B.C.E. Pp. 529–38 in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine*, ed. W. G. Dever and S. Gitin. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- 2006 The Borders and *De Facto* Size of Jerusalem in the Persian Period. Pp. 147–66 in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- 2009 The Temple Mount in Jerusalem during the First Temple Period: An Archaeologist's View. Pp. 473–83 in *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, ed. D. Schloen. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.
- Vincent, H., and Steve, A.
- 1954 *Jérusalem de l'Ancien Testament: Recherches d'archéologie et d'histoire*. Paris: Gabalda.
- Williamson, H. G. M.
- 1984 Nehemiah's Walls Revisited. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116: 81–88.

The Real History: The Theological Ideas behind Nehemiah's Wall

MANFRED OEMING

Why the Dominance of Archaeology and the Underestimation of Theology Are a Problem When Reconstructing Factual History

In the modern world, many people, especially scientists with an enlightened consciousness, do not at all recognize religion as a factor of real history and life; some who do accept religion as having a claim on them tend to isolate it as a separate enclosed area of their personal lives. These viewpoints would have been unthinkable in the ancient world. To members of an ancient society, religion was not an optional or superfluous but rather was the central aspect of existence that formed the basis of the whole of life. In the book of Nehemiah, we can study this difference between ancient and contemporary epistemology. While the book itself is deeply informed by theological ideas, modern interpreters are looking for the supposed “real” history behind these naïve ideas. Therefore, whenever Hebrew Bible exegesis deals with Nehemiah’s wall, it tends to pursue only the so-called historical questions of its location and extent. The majority of literature on the topic deals with archaeological issues surrounding the wall.¹ Over the course of research history, Nehemiah’s Jerusalem has continued to shrink. At the beginning of the 20th century, scholars still assumed that the city contained about 100,000 inhabitants. This number has continually decreased; recent estimates

1. For an excellent survey of research and very helpful maps of all excavations ever conducted in Jerusalem, see O. Lipschits, “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Facts and Interpretations,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9 (2010) 1–30, esp. the extensive bibliography on pp. 23–30. I have taken part in this discussion: “Zur Topographie und Archäologie Jerusalems in der Perserzeit,” in *Nehemia* (ed. A. H. J. Gunneweg; KAT 19/2; Gütersloh: Mohn 1987) 36–38, 180–94.

speak of only 1,000 inhabitants. "In the last few years, there has been a drastic decline in scholarly estimates of Jerusalem's population in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods."² Some of the most recent publications even doubt whether Nehemiah ever built a wall. This radical position is held by Wolfgang Zwickel and Israel Finkelstein,³ who have thus laid the foundation for an ultra-minimalistic view. Zwickel compares Jerusalem to Altötting, a pilgrimage site located in the open field without any protection. He assumes about 200 inhabitants before and 600 after Nehemiah's reform. Finkelstein only allows hard archaeological facts and concludes: "The finds indicate that in the Persian and early Hellenistic periods Jerusalem was a small unfortified village that stretched over an area of about twenty dunams, with a population of a few hundred people—that is, not much more than one hundred adult men. This population—and the depleted population of the Jerusalem countryside in particular and the entire territory of Yehud in general—could not have supported a major reconstruction effort of the ruined Iron II fortifications of the city." According to Finkelstein, the entire province of Judah was hardly populated at all. "It seems that Yehud stretched around Jerusalem and Ramat Rahel, with a possible extension further north and to Jericho and En-Gedi in the east. It did not include territory in the Shephelah. The population of Yehud can be estimated at ca. 12,000 people."⁴ He then draws literary-critical conclusions from archaeological evidence and dates the book of Nehemiah during the Maccabean period; the construction of the Hasmonean wall thus gave rise to this book.

I believe these conclusions evidence a highly problematic methodological starting point. It is impossible to write a literary history solely based on excavated material remains (of which there are very few and which is a small fraction of what actually existed). Nadav Na'aman and Oded Lipschits have thus correctly repudiated this position in the strongest terms. Na'aman includes evidence from the Elephantine correspondence, which describes Jerusalem as a small stronghold with in-

2. O. Lipschits, "Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem," 1–2.

3. W. Zwickel, "Jerusalem und Samaria zur Zeit Nehemias: Ein Vergleich," *BZ* 52 (2008) 201–22, esp. pp. 216–17; I. Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian (and Early Hellenistic) Period and the Wall of Nehemiah," *JSOT* 32 (2008) 501–20, esp. pp. 502–5; idem, "Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," *PEQ* 140 (2008) 1–10; idem, "The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods," *RB* 117 (2010) 39–54.

4. *Ibid.*, 54.

fluence within the Persian court. He asks a few decisive questions: "We may question Finkelstein's assumption that biblical authors were free to manipulate the evidence even when it contradicted the reality of their own time. It is inconceivable that scribes, who lived in the Hasmonaean period and knew very well that the wall was built at that time, ignored it altogether and attributed the building to Nehemiah, who lived three hundred years before their time."⁵ I completely agree with Na'aman's balanced conclusion: "Taking into account the relatively small number of people who built the wall, and that it took only fifty-two days to build (Neh 6:5), Nehemiah's wall must have been thin, an enclosure rather than a city wall. On three sides it was built on the foundations of the First Temple city wall, so these upper courses on top of the early wall simply could not have survived. I agree with scholars who have suggested—on the basis of the description—that on the eastern side Nehemiah deviated from the line of the early wall and constructed a new wall near the eastern edge of the city. This must have been a thin, fragmentary wall, rising on top of a steep slope. Such a thin wall could hardly survive the erosion and extensive building operations that took place on that slope in later years. It is therefore unlikely that the enclosure wall built by Nehemiah in the City of David would last, and it is not surprising that it has not been found."⁶

Lipschits has pointed out (including new evidence from the distribution of Yehud stamp impressions) that a "superminimalist" position cannot be defended. "The meager finds from the Persian and early Hellenistic periods can only be interpreted as evidence of a meager settlement in the City of David between the late Iron Age and the Hasmonaean period (early 6th to 2nd centuries B.C.E.). This is an observation shared by all scholars dealing with Persian period finds in Jerusalem." The fact that we find hardly any remnants of Nehemiah's wall does not necessitate that it never existed.⁷ The later Hasmonaean and Roman construction efforts most likely eradicated any trace of previously existing walls, if they were still standing at all given the extreme decline of the

5. N. Na'aman, "Does Archaeology Really Deserve the Status of a 'High Court' in Biblical Historical Research?" in *Between Evidence and Ideology: Essays on the History of Ancient Israel Read at the Joint Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study and the Oud Testamentisch Studien* (ed. B. Becking, L. L. Grabbe; Old Testament Studies; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 165–183, esp. pp. 173–74.

6. Ibid.

7. We must continually adhere to the old principle "the absence of evidence is not an evidence of absence"!

slope. The Ophel must be taken into consideration as a location for a Persian settlement as well:

The importance of the Ophel hill as the main built-up area in the Persian and Early Hellenistic periods was never discussed in the archaeological and historical research. The reason was the scarcity of finds in this area, of about 20 dunams, between the ascension of the hill towards the Temple Mount and the northern part of the City of David. This is the only flat, easy-to-settle area in the city. Its proximity to the Temple Mount on the one hand and the easy option to fortify it (between the Kidron valley to the east, the Tyropoeon in the west, the Temple Mount to the north and the City of David to the south), made it the preferred option for settlement in the Persian period.⁸

Historically speaking, the amount of new insight provided by recent scholarship is quite small:

Jerusalem was no doubt a small city, but the ultra-minimalistic views expressed by Zwickel and Finkelstein should be rejected along with their implications for the study of the Biblical, archaeological and historical research of the Persian period.⁹

The following discussion thus assumes that Nehemiah did build a wall in the 5th century. It may well be that this wall consisted mostly of poorly restored remnants of the wall destroyed by the Babylonians. It was probably a much smaller wall and enclosed only the city of David. We must, however, consider the strong main argument that the many gates, locks, and bars mentioned in Nehemiah 3 are a sign of contrivance. This number of gates does not at all harmonize with the supposedly meager size of the wall, the speed of the construction efforts, and the small enclosed area. We must either assume a later insertion into the text, or—an alternative I consider very plausible—שַׁעַר actually refers to something other than the massive six-chambered gates known from Iron Age cities. The tiny wall contained several “openings” with more symbolic than military value. They imply that this city was “financed” by various families (the correct translation of הִהְיִיךְ).¹⁰ If the wall was quite a bit smaller than Hiskia’s wall, then we must consider why such a puny construction gave rise to this sort of literary production, leading to an entire book that deals with its planning, construction, dedication and ethical-cultic functions.

8. Lipschits, “Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem,” 19.

9. Ibid., 20.

10. Idem, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 168–173, esp. pp. 168–69.

In essence, the book of Nehemiah deals with nothing but the wall. Even if it is composed of varied political, cultic-religious, and social content, the wall is the backbone of the book. I believe that we can only find an answer to this question in a detailed analysis of the world view implied by the construction of the wall. The *ideological* and *theological* importance of this wall, however, is rarely discussed. This most likely reflects the fact that the book of Nehemiah itself does not seem very concerned with the question of *why* the wall is so important for Nehemiah. The book does not systematically unfold the wall's *theological* importance; at most, this issue is merely insinuated. Thus, it is no surprise that scholarship has mostly dealt with this question in passing.¹¹ The question is: did the wall have a theological importance at all, and is it an exaggeration even to speak of a world view implied by the wall? I believe that this world view is at the thematic core of the book.

The Secular Meaning of the Wall: A Research Survey

When attempting to explain the relevance of building a wall, commentaries resort to one of four models.

1. The wall was a product of the opposition to the Samaritans; it was primarily an *anti-Samaritan* defense. In other words, the powerful Samaritans threatened to override Yehud in cultural terms. Those surrounding Ezra and Nehemiah attempted to create a clear boundary against this threat. Building the wall served the group interests of the Jerusalem priests, who were fighting for the upper hand in tough competition with Yahweh-sanctuaries in Samaria and Judah. The wall was intended to snuff the competition. See, for example, M. Noth and A. H. J. Gunneweg.¹²

2. The wall primarily served a *political function*. It was an aid in creating a national identity.¹³ This theory is supported by the statements

11. J. Vermeulen, "Pourquoi fallait-il édifier des remparts? Le Siracide et Néhémie," in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom* (ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeulen; BETL 143; Leuven: Peeters 1999) 195–213.

12. M. Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963) 292–95; Gunneweg, *Nehemia*.

13. E. A. Knauf, "Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judaeon Language and Literature," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 291–350, esp. pp. 303–4, 326–30.

of those opposing the wall for political reasons,¹⁴ who initially succeeded in preventing its construction. This political opposition understood correctly what was happening in Jerusalem. According to Ulrich Kellermann,¹⁵ Nehemiah had to write an apology precisely because he had to downplay the political importance of the wall when addressing Persian authorities. Dieter Böhler's hypothesis stands at the fringes of the discussion. He aims to demonstrate on the basis of textual criticism that the reconstructed original text of 3 Esdras has preserved an original text that speaks only of the construction of the *temple* and the introduction of the Torah. The entire report of Nehemiah's wall construction is a secondary insertion and reinterpretation of this first account.¹⁶ Nehemiah's "memoirs" are actually nothing but a Maccabean attempt to legitimize their reign by means of "ancient" examples:

The insertion of Nehemiah's "memoires" into the old narrative Esdr α^* and the wide reaching reinterpretation of a restauration [*sic*] account, which assumes Israel's political independence to be a condition of its complete restitution, even for a life according to the Torah, is best explained with the circumstances existing between 164 and 160.¹⁷

This presumption, which emphasizes the political function of the wall—but 300 years after Nehemiah—has found several followers.¹⁸

3. Oded Lipschits¹⁹ believes that the wall has no theological context but rather must be understood within the *framework of economics*. Only those who can lay a claim to wealth are in need of a wall. The building of the wall is an expression of the fact that within impoverished Judah at least Jerusalem needs a wall, because the "gross urban product" is on the rise. The inhabitants have the property to finance the wall and to protect their growing wealth from outside raids.

14. "If this city is rebuilt and the walls completed, they will not pay tribute, poll tax, or land tax, and in the end it will harm the kingdom" (Ezra 4:13).

15. U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (BZAW 102; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967).

16. D. Böhler, *Die heilige Stadt in Esdras a und Esra-Nehemia: Zwei Konzeptionen der Wiederherstellung Israels* (OBO 158; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 398.

17. S. Graetz, *Das Edikt des Artaxerxes. Eine Untersuchung zum religionspolitischen und historischen Umfeld von Esra 7,12–26* (BZAW 337; Berlin: de Gruyter 2004).

18. See *ibid.* as well as Finkelstein's position discussion above.

19. Cf. Lipschits, *Fall and Rise*, 168–73.

4. An increasingly popular theory is the idea that *all theological statements must be understood as secondary additions* to the text. The "Nehemiah Memoir" (ca. 450 B.C.E.) was originally void of all theological intention and did not address the theological importance of the wall for this very reason. The Chronicler (330–300 B.C.E.) or even later redactors down to the final redactional layer (about 140 B.C.E.) were the first to insert isolated theological highlights, such as the prayers in chaps. 1 and 2, 6:16, or 12:27–30 (A. H. J. Gunneweg, R. G. Kratz, J. Wright).²⁰ H. G. M. Williamson describes these new suggestions as follows:

In very recent years, however, there has been a radical and dramatic shift in approach to these issues. The way was programmatically opened by R. G. Kratz and it was enthusiastically developed by one of his pupils, J. Wright, who argued . . . that the Nehemiah Memoir originally took the form of a building inscription that is preserved in parts of no more than fifteen mainly scattered verses and that this grew by many successive redactions and reworkings into the text that we have today.²¹

This view reflects a general trend in Hebrew Bible scholarship. Many genetic models of text development for historical, legal, and wisdom literature assume that in the beginning are only nontheological texts that are theologized late or very late. There seems to be a growing agreement that we will best understand these texts if we assume only secular factors in the initial creation and formation of the texts. I remain very skeptical about this trend in general but also regarding the building of Nehemiah's wall. It is simply not plausible to separate secular from religious thought in the context of the ancient Near East; this is a modern artifice.²²

With great caution, I would like to pose at least the following questions to all models that operate within a purely secular context: can

20. Gunneweg, *Nehemia*; R. Kratz, *Die Erzählenden Werke*; J. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (BZAW 348; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); idem, "A New Model of the Composition of Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. O. Lipschits, G. Knoppers, and R. Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007) 333–48.

21. H. G. M. Williamson, "Review of *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7–10 and Nehemia 8*," by Juha Pakkala, *JTS* 58 (2007) 584–89, esp. p. 584.

22. For the connection of politics and religion see R. Albertz, "Ethnische und kultische Konzepte in der Politik Nehemias," in *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie des Alten, Ersten Testaments* (ed. F. L. Hossfeld and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; HBS 44; Freiburg: Herder 2004) 13–32.

historical developments be the result of *a single* cause? Is history not always an arena where several factors interact? Are the religious convictions held by individuals and groups not an influential factor in how history develops and takes on shape? Does recent history not show clearly that the building of a wall is the result of many factors? Do we as historians tend to underestimate the importance of religion for the development of history? Must the factor *theology* necessarily be secondary, even though we can *also* undoubtedly identify economic influences or reasons of national psychology or military interest? Is not religion often one of the strongest motivations behind human accomplishments? Should not we be more critical when exegetes attempt to understand biblical texts by searching for the “true” underpinnings of the theological-religious issues mentioned in the texts and relegate these theological-religious motifs to the status of “secondary” additions? Does this “demythologizing” not view history through a lens that is much too one dimensional? Given these questions, I view with great reserve the declaration that all theological elements in the book of Nehemiah are secondary. I would only follow this approach when no plausible reason exists to understand these elements as an original part of the text.

The Theology of the Wall in the Book of Nehemiah

The structure of the book of Nehemiah is very complex; a detailed analysis of its literary history is complicated. I believe the book—using a lot of older material from Nehemiah’s days—was completed for the most part by 300 B.C.E. and includes only a few insertions from later times. If we follow the story of the *book* of Nehemiah, building the wall contains an obvious, strong religious-theological component. It begins with the tears Nehemiah sheds over the news that the wall is in such a state of disrepair and with his prayers that extend over many days (Neh 1:4). From the beginning, prayer is a central to dealing with the wall. Current research, however, is almost unanimous that the wall over which Nehemiah sheds his tears cannot be the wall destroyed by the Babylonians. Supporting this position are 2 Kgs 25:10 // 2 Chr 36:2; these texts speak of *nataz*, that is, the total destruction and grinding of the wall. Neh 1:3–5 seems only to speak of a few cracks and tears in the wall.

Nehemiah’s reaction to the news is so strong that this report cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar some 140 years previously. A recent event as yet unconfirmed in Susa, must

be intended. And for this the destruction mentioned briefly in Ezra 4:23 presents itself as the ideal, and indeed only possible, candidate. If this conclusion is sound, and if Ezra's journey to Jerusalem is to be dated to 458 BCE then it follows that the event of Ezra 4 could have taken place while Ezra was present.²³

We know about the anti-Persian activities:

- 460 B.C.E.: an attic-delfic attack to conquer Egypt; Artaxerxes I (465–424) repeatedly had trouble with this aggression
- 459: an Egyptian revolt against Persia with Greek aid
- 458: the Greek army lands on the coast
- 456: Megabyssos was sent to suppress the Egyptian revolt
- 454: the Greeks and Egyptians reach an armistice; the Greeks retreat from Egypt through ancient Israel
- 448: the peace of Kallias between Persia and Athens was fixed

Did Nehemiah hear about the destruction of Jerusalem by Megabyssos? I believe this common explanation to be highly improbable. On the one hand, Ezra states clearly in 4:23 that a wall was not built, because strong oppositional forces prevented it. On the other hand, speculation about a wall of which we know nothing is a hazardous enterprise, to say the least. And, third, if Oded Lipschits is correct—and I believe he is—then the erection of a wall before Nehemiah's time is not possible, because the economic presuppositions for such a large construction project have not been given. In the early Persian period, Ramat Rahel was the economic and administrative center. It seems to me that there is only one conclusion that makes sense: the wall over which Nehemiah sheds his tears is the very same wall that was destroyed 140 years earlier. Nehemiah's dramatic reaction is an artful literary device to seize the reader's interest: what meaning did this wall have?

Following the narrative logic in Nehemiah, the wall that was destroyed by the Babylonians was never rebuilt, because the rebuilding was prevented by the Samaritans. Any attempt to reconstruct the true history by introducing a second wall misses the psychological narrative intention. What the destruction of the wall meant is related to the reader in the following prayer. Nehemiah's confession of sins simultaneously historical recourse, much like Nehemiah 9.²⁴ The meaning of history is uncovered in this prayer:

23. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 172.

24. Cf. M. Oeming, "'See, We are Serving Today' (Nehemiah 9:36): Nehemiah 9 as a Theological Interpretation of the Persian Period," in *Judah and the*

I said: “YHWH, God of Heaven, great and awesome God, who stays faithful to his covenant with those who love him and keep his commandments! Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to receive the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you now, day and night, on behalf of the Israelites, your servants, confessing the sins that we Israelites have committed against you, sins that I and my father’s house have committed. We have offended you by not keeping the commandments, the laws, and the rules that you gave to your servant Moses. Be mindful of the promise you gave to your servant Moses: ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you turn back to me, faithfully keep my commandments, even if your dispersed are at the ends of the earth, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I have chosen to establish my name.’ For they are your servants and your people whom you redeemed by your great power and your mighty hand. YHWH let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who desire to hold your name in awe. Grant your servant success today, and dispose that man to be compassionate toward him!” I was the king’s cupbearer at the time. (Neh 1:5–11)

The prayer clearly defines Torah as the determining factor of history. Because Israel had violated Torah, it was punished with exile and a life in the Diaspora. Jerusalem is introduced as the location chosen by God as the dwelling place of his shechina. Thus, the reader of the book of Nehemiah discovers at the very beginning: the city of God, the dwelling place of God, of his name, is the central topic of the book. Observing Torah and gathering a people of God to live as servants of God stands at the center of the book’s intention. At the same time, the book introduces the promise that God will return the worldwide Diaspora if—in contrast to earlier generations—they now live according to Torah and prove to be true servants of God (וְהָם עֲבָדֶיךָ וְעַמְּךָ).

The prayer of confession establishes a magnificent framework for the coming construction project. The context of the book is world history in general: because Israel’s forefathers have offended God and acted in a despicable manner, they now bear the punishment of dispersion. Above all, however, hovers the promise of regathering God’s people. I would even venture the hypothesis that the prayer in Nehemiah 1 forms the blueprint for the entire book. The building of the wall, the list of returnees in Nehemiah 7, the solemn declaration of allegiance to Torah during the festivities surrounding the covenant renewal, the large

prayer of confession in Nehemiah 8–10, and the liturgical dedication of the wall in chap. 12 can all be explained by, in some cases even derived from, this prayer. The same is true for Nehemiah's reforms concerned with life according to Torah within the wall: a life determined by social justice, Sabbath observance and the prohibition of mixed marriages (Nehemiah 5 and 13). All this cannot be dealt with in detail at present. One thing, however, seems to emerge: *It would hardly be possible to over-emphasize the theological importance of the wall! Construction of the wall was begun in direct dialogue with God and is to be completed with the help of God.*

The actions that follow are also determined by divine leadership. God acts as the natural center of power, of world power, at the court of the Persian king. Without conscious awareness, the Persian king does what Nehemiah had asked of God. A short prayer precedes Nehemiah's speech (Neh 2:4). "The emphasis on prayer in Neh 1 and 2:1–10 shows that the royal authorization is once more to be seen as the instrument of divine initiative."²⁵

All of Nehemiah's mysterious action in chaps. 3–6 stand within this context. The issue is the hidden activity of God on earth. The fact that the wall can be built despite enemy opposition is a miracle, only explainable through God's gracious support. This is mentioned programmatically in Neh 6:16 (after only 52 days of building work):

When all our enemies heard it, all the nations around us were intimidated, and fell very low in their own estimation; they realized that this work had been accomplished by the help of our God. (Neh 6:16)

If we are to take these texts seriously, then the people who were building the wall saw themselves as a work force laboring *in the service of* the forefathers and God. The wall then appears as the means of preserving the honor of the forefathers and establishing a dwelling place for the name of God. This intention is mentioned explicitly on several occasions.

Neh 2:3, 5 emphasizes twice that Jerusalem is the city in which the graves of the forefathers are located (הָעִיר בֵּית-קְבוּרוֹת אֲבוֹתַי). The term "city of David" belongs in this context. Nehemiah 11 twice speaks of Jerusalem as the "holy city" (עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ), emphasizing the high privilege attached to living within its walls.

The officers of the people settled in Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots for one out of ten to come and settle in the holy city of Jerusalem, and the other nine-tenths to stay in the towns. (Neh 11:1)

25. Williamson 1985, XLIX.

The following passages all speak to the same issue:

All the Levites in the holy city—284. (Neh 11:18)

At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites, wherever they lived, were sought out and brought to Jerusalem to celebrate a joyful dedication with thanksgiving and with song, accompanied by cymbals, harps, and lyres. The priests and Levites purified themselves; then they purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. (Neh 12:27–30)

The text is quite clear on this issue: The dedication of the wall is a cultic act. Everything must be purified, even the buildings. The joy over the wall's successful completion with the appearance of Levitic choirs and instrumentalists is almost an echo of Psalm 150.

The ending of the book of Nehemiah hearkens back to its beginning and emphasizes that the holiness of the city, where God dwells, must never again be threatened by desecrating the Sabbath.

This is just what your ancestors did, and for it God brought all this misfortune on this city; and now you give cause for further wrath against Israel by profaning the Sabbath! (Neh 13:18)

Once we recognize that the wall has a theological function, then we even understand the intention of Nehemiah 13: the decisive aspect of this wall is the fact that its gates can be closed and that this self-chosen isolation can determine one's identity.²⁶ When the gates are closed in Neh 13:19, we witness an example of the reason that the wall was built in the first place: the wall created a space within which Israel existed as it was destined to, a center of life lived according to Torah, a closed-off space of holiness.

In summary, I would like to emphasize the following theological-symbolic importance of Nehemiah's wall that existed *in addition* to political, national, military and economical interests:

The wall and salvation history. The destruction of the wall was a sign of Israel's sin and God's punishment of his people. Not only must the temple be rebuilt for the time of judgment and oppression to end (Haggai, Zacharia), the wall must also stand once again. The building of the wall is a sign that an era in salvation history has ended: it is a symbol for

26. On the later function of the wall, see R. Feldmeier, "Weise hinter 'eisernen Mauern': Tora und jüdisches Selbstverständnis zwischen Akkulturation und Absonderung im Aristeeasbrief," in *Die Spetuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer; WUNT 72; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1994) 20–37.

God's active forgiveness. This is the reason for the enthusiastic celebration of the wall's completion. Following the temple, the wall was necessary for a *restitutio ad integrum*. (The only construction project missing then was the royal palace—and Nehemiah was probably uninterested in its reconstruction!)

The wall, ethics, and cultic matters. Because of the wall, the city can once again exist as a "holy city." Within the boundaries of the wall, Torah has special authority, especially in regard to Sabbath observance and avoiding religiously mixed marriages, but also in regard to issues of social justice such as the freeing of indebted slaves. Within the wall, the true Israel lives unmixed as a chosen people. The boundary determines identity. External construction and internal status quo cohere with each other. Erecting the wall is part of spiritual renewal.²⁷

The wall and theology. God, or better, the name of God can only dwell in a city with a wall. Proper cultic procedures can only take place within a purified wall. The wall surrounds the dwelling place chosen by God—it thus must be cultically pure. The construction of the wall is an act of God that also has a missionary aspect, leading to the recognition and acceptance of God (Neh 6:18).

Theology of the Wall in the Context of Theological Schools of the Persian Era

I have attempted to illuminate the profound "theology of the wall" in the book of Nehemiah. This set of theological ideas stands at the heart of the book of Nehemiah and determines its very structure. I even went so far as to claim that these thoughts are not only contained in the letters of the book within the story but were also part of the psychological make up of those who built the wall in 52 days (Neh 6:15) within history. Were these thoughts limited to the immediate circle around Nehemiah (and Ezra), or can we locate other schools of thought that developed similar ideas?

Despite the vast difficulties that surround dating our texts, I would suggest the existence of four different theological schools or streams of thought in which this matrix of ideas can be found:

27. The Frauenkirche in Dresden provides an apt analogy. Of course it is true that construction companies have earned a lot of money; of course hotels and businesses in the area have profited from this project. But the driving force behind the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche was not financial gain but a profound symbolic sense of national renewal.

Late Redactional Layers in Prophetic Books

Titus Reinmuth has examined related texts from the corpus of postexilic prophecy of salvation, especially Isa 58:12, Isa 61:4, Amos 9:11, and Micah 7:11.²⁸ He concludes that the destruction and rebuilding of Jerusalem and its wall—often connected to the term *פֶּרֶץ*—is a central topic in several prophetic texts from the postexilic period. “A detailed examination of these texts shows that the *rifts* in the wall that are closed in Nehemiah’s report cannot be seen in line with prophetic signs announcing the onset of an era of salvation.”²⁹ Reinmuth’s negative conclusion cannot, however, negate the fact that—despite all differences in specific terminology—there is a strong thematic connection between these texts. Reinmuth has thus not disproved Kellermann’s old hypothesis that postulates that the report of Nehemiah “provides us with material that corresponds to promises, transmitted and updated by post-exilic prophetic eschatology.”³⁰ If anything, we must word Kellermann’s thesis with greater caution. Dependence or social interaction between Nehemiah and prophetic circles cannot be shown; however, a certain overlap of ideas and thematic analogy is undeniable. This analogy is most clear in the issue of rebuilding the city. In their own way, both prophetic texts and Nehemiah develop a theology of Zion. The best example for this concept is Nehemiah 5, the forgiveness of debt and the subsequent release of slaves. Antisocial acts such as holding slaves and charging interest are simply not acceptable within the walls of Jerusalem, even if the Torah does not prohibit them. Here, we also see a thematic connection to Deutero-Isaiah: the theology of history assumes that the period of God’s judgment over his people is now over. The period of salvation has started. I understand Deutero-Isaiah not only as a late exilic preacher but also as a school of thought that had a decisive influence on developments in the early postexilic period of the 5th century. There were prophetic circles that divided history in an era of

28. T. Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur traditionsgeschichtlichen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemias* (OBO 183; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag /Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002) 234–46; “Men from your midst shall rebuild ancient ruins, You shall restore foundations laid long ago. And you shall be called ‘Repairer of fallen walls, restorer of lanes for habitation’” (Isa 58:12); “And they shall build the ancient ruins, raise up the desolations of old, and renew the ruined cities, the desolations of many ages” (Isa 61:4).

29. *Ibid.*, 245.

30. Kellermann, *Nehemia*, 182.

judgment and an era of salvation and connected this era of salvation to Persian reign. The return of YHWH to Zion, the restitution, was also connected to this Persian reign. What the book of Lamentations lamented is reversed: God returns to Zion, his name finds a dwelling there—a fact expressed in language strongly reminiscent of Deuteronomy:

YHWH resolved to destroy the wall of Fair Zion; he measured with a line, refrained not from bringing destruction. He has made wall and rampart to mourn, together they languish. (Lam 2:8)

And the sons of them that afflicted you shall come bending unto you; and all they that despised you shall bow themselves down at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you the city of YHWH, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (Isa 60:14)

Ezekiel 40–48

Furthermore, there is a certain relation between prophetic Zion-theology and Ezekiel 40–48. Even if the precise dating of this text is a matter of controversial debate, its framework can probably be dated in the 6th century. These chapters are determined by the concept of concentric circles of holiness, the city and its wall being a kind of *temenos*, a sacred area.

A wall encircles the temple (Ezek 40:7, 42:10–20, 46:23) and defines the city of God as a true city: “The circumference of the city shall be eighteen thousand cubits. And the name of the city from that time on shall be, YHWH is there” (Ezek 48:35).

In the portrayal of the eschatological future, the wall also plays a highly important role: “Seventy weeks are decreed upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy” (Dan 9:24; cf. Matt 27:53;³¹ Rev 11:2, 21:10, 22:19).

Psalms

Another related concept is found in the piety of some Zion Psalms. The clearest evidence for the belief that Temple and wall belong together is located in Ps 51:18–19. The text there speaks *unmistakably* of the cultic dimension of the wall³².

31. τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν.

32. R. Mosis recognizes here a very spiritual view of the wall. It is pars pro toto for the „von Gott selbst zu errichtende, zukünftige und neue Gestalt

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

As R. Kittel states: "It is not possible to perform correct and complete sacrifices as long as Jerusalem and the Temple have not been restored."³³ Thus, the text cannot date back to exilic or early post-exilic times. Psalm 51 only mentions the wall and not the temple, because the wall is the only issue at stake. The temple has already been rebuilt. Thus, we may conclude with M. Dahood: "The poem must be dated after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and before the restoration of the wall under Nehemiah in 444 BCE."³⁴ Several commentators correctly draw a direct connection between Psalm 51 and Nehemiah's wall.³⁵ L. Rost even asks: "Was the text written during the construction of the wall?"³⁶

Apart from Psalm 51, we must take note of the Psalms of Zion. Many believe that there is very old, pre-Israelite material in these Psalms. Based on my work on Korahite Psalms, I am certain that these Psalms are postexilic in their present form. If old material is present, then it was updated and reapplied in postexilic times. It is difficult to argue a precise date for these texts, but the time of Nehemiah is a very strong possibility. The city has been rebuilt, the enemies who had wanted to prevent the rebuilding of the wall have failed. There are strong thematic and linguistic connections between Ps 46:11 and Neh 4:5 and 6:16.³⁷

There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. עִיר־אֱלֹהִים קִדְשׁ מִשְׁכָּנֵי

Jerusalems überhaupt . . . , Ikone' des nicht mehr überbietbaren und nicht mehr verlierbaren, also ,eschatologischen' Heilszustandes" ("Die Mauern Jerusalems: Beobachtungen zu Ps 51,20f," in, *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und biblische Theologie* (ed. J. Hausmann and H. Preuss; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1992) 201–15, esp. p. 214.

33. R. Kittel, *Psalmen* (4th ed.; KAT 13; Leipzig: Deichert, 1922) 194.

34. M. Dahood, *Psalms II: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 9; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968) 9.

35. Z. B. H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (5th ed.; BKAT; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) 541.

36. L. Rost, "Ein Psalterproblem," *TLZ* 93 (1968) 246.

37. "And our foes were saying, 'Before they know or see it, we shall be in among them and kill them, and put a stop to the work'" (Neh 4:5); "When all our enemies heard it, all the nations round about us were intimidated, and fell very low in their own estimation; they realized that this work had been accomplished by the help of our God" (6:16).

עֲלֶיָּהּ). God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God will help her, and that right early. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. YHWH of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah* Come, behold the works of Jehovah, what desolations he has made in the earth. He makes wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.¹¹ YHWH of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

The Theology of the Wall in Ancient Near Eastern Parallels

The idea that a city is built in dedication to a god so that he may dwell acceptably according to his status is not limited to Israel. We also encounter this concept more or less clearly in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Avigdor Hurowitz³⁸ has analyzed more than 20 building stories from the Sumerian era to Josephus's description of Herod's construction of the temple. He recognizes a constant pattern that uses the same elements in a very stereotypical fashion. In connection with Nehemiah's wall he emphasizes the following aspects as typical for this pattern: the lament over the destruction of the previous construction, the royal command to rebuild the wall and the repopulation of the newly erected city. He thus concludes that the similarity between the Nehemiah memoirs and the royal inscriptions of the ancient Near East, already emphasized in 1923 and 1964 by Mowinkel, constitutes the interpretive key to the book of Nehemiah. Moving beyond Hurowitz's important contribution, it is possible to show that the construction of an enclosing wall is also one of the classical tasks of a Pharaoh:

He encountered the Temple, the work of his fathers, as the horizon of Horus, who dwells on the summit of the heavens. The two sides of the atrium are carried by columns of lotos and papyrus, it is as glorious as the large palace. He built a front court and a pylon with its gate, he protected its circumference with a wall on all four sides, as it accords with the order of the Temple written by the high priest Imhotep, the great, the son of Ptah. He made a court with pillars on its side and a pylon, the height of which breaks through the heavens.

38. V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings* (JSOTSup 115; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1992) 118–24.

He surrounded its circumference on all four sides with a wall made of strong and bright sandstone, by implementing the plan begun by the predecessors and written in the great plan of this book that fell from the heavens north of Memphis.³⁹

It is often attested in Egyptian sources that a wall belonged not only to a city but also to the holy area of a Temple. This wall could have various different heights (ranging from one to eight meters). The most well-known temple in Karnak, for example, is dedicated to Amun, the “king of the gods.” The entire temple area (123 ha) is surrounded by a wall 2.1 km in length. The Ramesseum—the burial temple of Ramses II—is surrounded by a wall 275 × 168 m long. The House of a Million Years, dedicated to Ramses III in Thebes, is entirely surrounded by a wall.⁴⁰ The temple walls in Egypt are certainly different from Nehemiah’s wall, but they show clearly that the Egyptians considered a wall to be an essential part of a holy area. If we take the texts and archaeological findings of the ancient Near East as a background, then it is no surprise that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah belong together. The temple construction, initiated under Ezra, “demanded” a surrounding wall in order to be complete. Perhaps this is why Nehemiah wept when he heard that the walls still lay in ruins.

Conclusion

We have seen that there is evidence for a widespread “theology of the wall” during the Persian period. What is indicated in the later redaction layers of the prophetic literature, the exilic and early postexilic prophecy of salvation, especially with Ezekiel, his students and Trito-Isaiah, but also in certain Psalms of Zion, is articulated most clearly in the book of Nehemiah. Many ancient Near East traditions also flow into this work. The reconstruction of the temple and its revived use, re-

39. Inscription of Edfu; quoted according to S. Wildung, *Ägypten: Von der prähistorischen Zeit bis zu den Römern* (Köln: Taschen, 2001) 196 (translation mine).

40. In the Egyptian concept of the world to come we find the idea of “the city of the god” (Osiris) protected by a “brazen” wall. This idea was transferred to the Pharaonic ideology and reached the symbolic language of the prophets; see Jer 1:18, 15:20; cf. S. Herrmann, “Die Herkunft der ‘ehernen Mauer’: Eine Miszelle zu Jeremia 1,18 und 15,20,” in *Altes Testament und christliche Verkündigung* (ed. M. Oeming and A. Graupner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1987) 344–52. Very often the holy district of Egyptian sanctuaries was protected by a wall; there are examples of walls of very different height, from 1 to 18 m.

ported to us in the book of Ezra, is only complete when God's dwelling place receives a wall. If we want to understand fully the historical reality behind the rebuilding of the wall, then we cannot claim the absolute importance of the political, national, economic, and military aspects. In the heads and hearts of those who built the wall, there existed a multifaceted complex of theological ideas: for them, the wall was a highly symbolic sign of the activity and the presence of God in history, for the end of God's judgment, for the return of God's name to his chosen dwelling place, for the beginning of the return of the Diaspora, for the holy space where the Torah was reigning. Israel regained its identity only within this wall. "The completion of the wall in Neh 7 symbolizes the firm establishment of the Temple community and the grounding of their identity. This is why the list of inhabitants, which corresponds closely to Ezra 2, is presented once again. The meaning of this list lies in the fact that the people of God are now written in a book: the true Israel is officially registered in 'sacred scripture.'"⁴¹

Such a highly symbolic understanding of a "simple" wall may sound very strange and exaggerated to modern people. But for the ancient Judeans in the Persian period and in the beginning of the Hellenistic era, the stones of Jerusalem's wall were much more than stones. They were "praying": God dwells here; inside these walls is the holy space where his will must be done. The ideology behind Nehemiah's wall has a long history of effect—up to this day.

41. T. Hieke, "Esra/Nehemia," *Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet*, 2005 Online: <http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/wiblex/> [accessed November 10, 2011] (translation mine).

Some Issues in Ezra–Nehemiah

RAN ZADOK

This chapter is devoted mainly to the remarkable figure of Nehemiah (and Ezra in his shadow) with a discussion of the pertinent sources. Certain issues are explored, evidence of diverse probative value is analyzed and much of the discussion evolves around prosopographical matters.

A. Sources and Background

1. Postexilic Biblical Sources and Their Relationship to Chronicles

Grintz, Willi, Japhet, Welten, and Kalimi¹ argue that Ezra–Nehemiah was completed before Chronicles (presumably, different editors, because

Author's note: This essay contains the following abbreviations: Akkad. = Akkadian; anc. = ancestor; br. = brother; d. = daughter; desc. = descendant; f. = father; gf. = grandfather; gs. = grandson; s. = son; LB = Late Babylonian; NA = Neo-Assyrian; NB = Neo-Babylonian; WSem. = West Semitic.

I would like to thank the trustees of the British Museum for permission to publish BM tablets or to quote unpublished tablets. In citations, the sequence of dates is day, month, and year; the months in roman numerals are Babylonian.

1. See Y. M. Grintz, *Studies in Early Biblical Ethnology and History* (Tel Aviv: Hakkibutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1969) 275f. [Hebrew]; T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung: Untersuchungen zur literarische Gestaltung der historischen Überlieferung Israels* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 106; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972) 180ff.; S. Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *VT* 18 (1968) 330–71; P. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 42; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973) 4 n. 15; I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 8–9; idem, *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place, and Writing* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica 46; Assen: van Gorcum, 2005) 54–56, 121, 145.

their agendas are different).² The critique of the thesis of a separate authorship propounded by Gunneweg and Talshir³ among others is not convincing. Ezra 1–6 (where several Aramaic and Hebrew documents are incorporated) might have been compiled by the Chronicler.⁴

Wellhausen⁵ was not sure whether the Chronicler substantially altered the “memoirs” of Ezra and Nehemiah. However, while the Nehemiah Memoir is almost free of the Chronicler’s interference,⁶ most of the other sources embedded in Ezra–Nehemiah are heavily edited by him. Hölscher (1923), Mowinckel, and Pohlmann (1970)⁷ produce strong arguments for the hypothesis that 3 Esdras is a fragment of an older and later rejected translation of the oldest form of the history of the Chronicler.⁸ It is widely accepted that there are three basic layers in Ezra–Nehemiah, namely, the combination of the narratives concern-

2. See also T. C. Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach of Ezra–Nehemiah* (SBLMS 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 14ff.; E. A. Knauf, “Zum Verhältnis von Esra 1, 1 zu 2 Chronik 36, 20–23,” *BN* 78 (1995) 16–17; S. Japhet, “Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?” in *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research* (ed. A. de Pury, T. Römer, and J. D. Macchi; JSOTSup 306; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 149, 154–55, 165–66; Kalimi, *An Ancient Israelite Historian*, 41–63, esp. pp. 54–56.

3. A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Nehemia* (KAT 19/2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1987) 26–27; D. Talshir, “Linguistic Analysis and the Question of Authorship in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah,” *VT* 32 (1982) 201–16.

4. Cf. W. T. in der Smitten, *Esra: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (Assen: van Gorcum, 1973); J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: SCM, 1988) 42; K.-F. Pohlmann, “Zur Frage von Korrespondenzen und Divergenzen zwischen den Chronikbüchern und dem Esra/Nehemia-Buch,” in *Congress Volume: Leuven 1989* (ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 314–30.

5. J. Wellhausen, “Die Rückkehr der Juden aus dem babylonischen Exil,” in *Nachrichten von der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (Klasse, 1895) 166.

6. See U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (BZAW 102; Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1967).

7. G. Hölscher, “Die Bücher Esra und Nehemia,” in *Die heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments* (ed. E. Kautzsch and D. Bertholet; 2 vols.; 4th ed., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1923) 2:491–562; S. Mowinckel, “Erwägungen zum chronistischen Geschichtswerk,” *ThLZ* 85 (1960) 1–8; idem, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemia 1–3* (Skrifter utgitt av det Norske videnskaps akademi i Oslo. II. Hist.-filos. klasse. Ny serie 3; 2 vols.; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964–65); K.-F. Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 104; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

8. Cf. A. Schenker, “La relation d’Esdras A’ au texte massorétique d’Esdras-Néhémie,” in *Tradition of the Text: Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Cele-*

ing Ezra (Ezra 7–10; Nehemiah 8–9, 10:30–40) and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1–7, *passim* in Nehemiah 9–12), the later addition of the lists in Neh 11:26–36, 12:1–26, and the prefix of Ezra 1–6. In addition, several gatekeepers' clans in Ezra–Nehemiah seem to be strangers, whereas in Chronicles they are considered Levites, a few of them rather prominent.

Here I enumerate 25 categories of sources for the postexilic (PE) period in a hypothetical order of precedence.⁹ The listing of these sources is not exhaustive but is basically undertaken in order to facilitate the evaluation of their prosopographical-historical contents.

- A. Haggai and Zechariah (A–B are listed first because they refer to the beginning of the PE period. This is done with full awareness of the problems inherent in using prophetic sources for prosopographical-historical purposes.)¹⁰
- B. Other PE prophets (Obadiah, Joel, Malachi, and Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah)
- C. Nehemiah Memoir (NM; Neh 1:1–7; 5; 13:4–31, with several embedded lists). This is the most important and reliable source (see below, §B)
- D. NM or post-NM (the short genealogy in Neh 13:13 is considered part of NM)
- E. Coherent lists 1: wall builders (Neh 3:1–32; merely edited by the Chronicler)¹¹
- F. Coherent lists 2: the census (Neh 7:6–73 > Ezra 2:1–67, including its headline; Neh 7:1–3 > Ezra 2:1–3)

bration of His 70th Birthday (ed. G. J. Norton and S. Pisano; OBO 109; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 218–48.

9. For a detailed discussion of the extent of the various sources, see L. W. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 14–24. The chronological sequence of the Hebrew Bible (Ezra–Nehemiah) is retained here (see, e.g., H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* [WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985] xxxix–xliv, with literature cited there). The inverted sequence is advocated by A. van Hoonacker, “La succession chronologique Néhémie–Esdras,” *RB* 32 (1923) 481–94 and *RB* 33 (1924) 33–64. He is followed by L. Dequeker, “Nehemiah and the Restoration of the Temple after the Exile,” in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature: Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans* (ed. M. Vervenne and J. Lust; Leuven: Peeters, 1997) 547–67; and A. Lemaire, “La fin de la première période perse en Égypte et la chronologie judéenne vers 400 av. J.-C.,” *Transeuphratène* 9 (1995) 57–58, among others.

10. Cf. R. Albertz, *Religionsgeschichte Israels in alttestamentlicher Zeit*, vol. 1: *Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende der Königszeit* (Grundrisse zum Alten Testament 8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992) *passim*.

11. See Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 206–7.

- G. Coherent lists 3: procession of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 12:27–43);
- H. Post-NM, but perhaps related to Haggai–Zechariah and NM (Neh 12:1–10)
- I. Post-NM (Neh 11:7–22; 12:11–26, including lengthy genealogies)
- J. The (faith-)covenant (Neh 10:1–29)
- K. Ezra narrative (Ezra 7:27–9:15; Nehemiah 8–9, 10:30–40)
- L. Incorporated documents 1: Cyrus’s decree (Heb.: Ezra 1:2–4; Aram. Ezra 6:2–5)
- M. Incorporated documents 2: letter to Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:8–16)
- N. Incorporated documents 3: reply of Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:17–22)
- O. Incorporated documents 4: letter of Tattenai and Shetar-bozenai to Darius (Ezra 5:7–17)
- P. Incorporated documents 5: reply of Darius (Ezra 6:6–12)
- Q. Incorporated documents 6: the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7:12–26. These documents were heavily edited in the Hellenistic period.¹² They are not authentic *stricto sensu*, but they are not devoid of Achaemenid terms [*ptm*, extant in an LB source as well, should be added to the list of three loanwords in Grabbe¹³].)
- R. Related lists 1: Ezra and the repatriates who joined him in Babylon (Ezra 8:1–14)
- S. Related lists 2: the repatriates who might have joined Ezra in Casiphia and Ahava and the clans’ chiefs from Casiphia and Ahava (Ezra 8:15–31)
- T. Related lists 3: Judeans with foreign wives (Ezra 10:18–44)
- U. Related lists 4: The people’s assembly (Neh 8:1–9:5)
- V. Ezra–Nehemiah attributed to the Chronicler: Ezra 1–7, 10 (for the authenticity of the correspondence, see Schwiderski and Clemens;¹⁴ Neh 11:4–6, 24, all with lengthy genealogies; 12:23–26)

12. See D. Schwiderski, *Handbuch des nordwestsemitischen Briefformulars: Ein Beitrag zur Echtheitsfrage der aramäischen Briefe des Esrabuches* (BZAW 295; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000) 381–82.

13. L. L. Grabbe, “The ‘Persian Documents’ in the Book of Ezra: Are They Authentic?” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 531–70, esp. pp. 557–58; cf. my “Achaemenid Queen,” *NABU* (2002/65); and my “Two Terms in Ezra,” *Aramaic Studies* 5 (2007) 255–61.

14. Schwiderski, *Handbuch*; D. M. Clemens, “Review of Schwiderski, *Handbuch*,” *JNES* 64 (2005) 133–37.

W. Ezra 1:1–3a = 2 Chr 36:22–23

X. Recorded only in Chronicles: 1 Chr 3:16–24 (the last Davidides and others), 9:2–17, 24:6–19 (mostly priests with lengthy genealogies)

Y. Esther (listed for completeness' sake; devoid of historical value)

For historical and socioeconomic background, see Ackroyd, Weinberg, Albertz, Stiegler, Briant, Fried and Lipschits; and for geopolitical background see Lemaire as well as Rainey and Notley.¹⁵

2. *The Returnees and the Restoration of the Temple*

A continuity of the temple personnel from the end of the period of the Divided Kingdom into postexilic times is plausible for the priests *ʾmr(yh)* and *Pšḥwr*. The former was identical with *ʾmry*¹⁶ only if *ʾmr(yh)*

15. *Historical and socioeconomic background*: P. R. Ackroyd, *Israel under Babylon and Persia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); idem, "The Jewish Community in Palestine in the Persian Period," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 1: *Introductions, the Persian Period* (ed. W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 130–61; idem, "Problems in the Handling of Biblical and Related Sources in the Achaemenid Period," in *Achaemenid History*, vol. 3: *Method and Theory: Proceedings of the London 1985 Achaemenid History Workshop* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1988) 33–54; idem, "The Written Evidence for Palestine," in *Achaemenid History*, vol. 4: *Centre and Periphery: Proceedings of the Groningen 1986 Achaemenid History Workshop* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg and A. Kuhrt; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990) 207–20; J. P. Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community* (JSOTSup 151; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); R. Albertz, *A History of the Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, vol. 2: *From the Exile to the Maccabees* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994); S. Stiegler, *Die nachexilische JHWH-Gemeinde in Jerusalem: Ein Beitrag zur einer alttestamentlichen Ekklesiologie* (Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums 34; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994); P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire* (trans. P. T. Daniel; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002) 487–88, 976–77, with extensive bibliography; L. S. Fried, *The Priest and the Great King: Temple-Palace Relations in the Persian Empire* (BJSUCSD 10; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004); O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

Geopolitical background: A. Lemaire, "Populations et territoires de Palestine à l'époque perse," *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990) 31–75; A. F. Rainey and R. S. Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006) 31, 278ff., 296.

16. Cf. E. Meyer, *Die Entstehung des Judenthums: Eine historische Untersuchung* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1896; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1966) 169–70.

has become a clan name. The attestation of *Mrmwt* and *Pšhr* at late pre-exilic Arad (both found in a room near the holy of holies of the sanctuary¹⁷) is not certain, because homonymy of *Pšhr* and *Mrmwt* cannot be ruled out. *Šlmyh* (Neh 3:30) may have been identical with *Šl(w)m/Mšlm(yhw)*, the gatekeepers' clan that was in charge of the Eastern Gate, because he is mentioned after *Šknyh* (Neh 3:29) and *Šl(w)m/Mšlm(yhw)*'s son built that gate. There is no definite proof that the clan is related to the late preexilic door keeper's father *Šlm* (Jer 35:4). *Šl(w)m/Mšlm(yhw)*'s son was indeed a door keeper.¹⁸ Liver rejects this identity on the assumption that his son (who was not explicitly a priest) might have been identical with his namesake (*Mšyh*, Jer 21:1; 29:25; 37:3).¹⁹ *-Hn* is perhaps a generic appellative (*lhn*), which was misunderstood as a preposition + PN.²⁰ During the period of the building of the temple, Haggai and Zechariah convey the ideology of the bicephal rule, that is, the diarchy of a Davidide dynast and a Zadokite priest.²¹ This "cohabitation" of Zerubbabel and Joshua might have created a tension between them (compare the troubled relationship between Nehemiah and Eliashib in the later Achaemenid period).²² From what we know about the practice of a world power predating the Achaemenid Empire, namely, the Neo-Assyrian Empire, compartmentalization, that is, the parallel existence of various domains (households, sg. *bitu*) in each province enhanced the system of checks and balances of the great king within the province in order to limit the power of the provincial governor.²³ Therefore, the diarchy might have suited the Achaemenid central government. Edel-

17. See Y. Aharoni, J. Naveh, and A. F. Rainey, *Arad Inscriptions* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981) 85 ad 50, 54.

18. Cf. L. Herzfeld, *Geschichte des Volkes Jisrael von der Zerstörung des ersten Tempels bis zur Einsetzung des Makkabäer Schimon zum hohen Priester und Fürsten* (Braunschweig: Westermann, 1847) 395.

19. J. Liver, *Chapters in the History of the Priests and Levites: Studies in the Lists of Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1968) 124 [Hebrew].

20. See A. Demsky, "The Temple Steward Josiah ben Zephaniah," *IEJ* 31 (1981) 100–102.

21. See A. Sérandour, "Les récits bibliques de la construction du second temple: leurs enjeux," *Transeuphratène* 11 (1996) 9–32.

22. For Zerubbabel and Joshua, see Fried, *Priest*, 203. For Nehemiah and Eliashib, see B. Gosse, "Le gouverneur et le grand prêtre et quelques problèmes de fonctionnement de la communauté postexilique," *Transeuphratène* 21 (2001) 149–74.

23. See F. M. Fales, *L'impero assiro: Storia e amministrazione* (Bari: Laterza, 2001) 59ff., 68–69, 284ff.

man²⁴ raised the justifiable question what was the interest of Cyrus for commissioning the building of a temple in a ruined city in an insignificant province with a functioning capital. This has driven her to suggest a much later date for the restoration of the temple, namely, by Nehemiah in the time of Artaxerxes I. On the other hand, Briend²⁵ presents the hypothesis that the Aaronid priests in the Babylonian Exile demanded the restoration of the temple from the Persian conquerors. The suggestion of Edelman²⁶ that Jehozadak may have been the grandson or great grandson of Seraiah, rather than his son (if a blood relative at all) is unfounded. Joshua son of Jehozadak is described as “a brand plucked out of the fire” in Zech 3:2, possibly because his grandfather Seraiah was executed according to 2 Kgs 25:18 and Jer 52:24.²⁷ The theory of some that Sheshbazzar and Zerubabel were vassal kings and Judah ceased to exist as a vassal kingdom only after ca. 525 B.C.E. is refuted by Na’aman (compare the evidence conveniently presented by Lemaire).²⁸ Edelman doubts whether Sheshbazzar was a Davidide,²⁹ but it should not be forgotten that the title *nśy’* has a strong tribal-dynastic connotation. Sheshbazzar, whose Judean connection is explicit but whose identity with the Davidide Shenazzar is doubtful, cannot be the satrap of Trans-euphrates as erroneously stated by Welch and Klinkott.³⁰ Trans-euphrates was separated from Babylonia not before 484 B.C.E. Its capital was

24. D. V. Edelman, *The Origins of the “Second” Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem* (Bible World; London: Equinox, 2005) 159.

25. J. Briend, “L’édit de Cyrus et sa valeur historique,” *Transeuphratène* 11 (1996) 44.

26. Edelman, *Origins*, 19.

27. See C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zecharia 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987) 187.

28. N. Na’aman, “Royal Vassals or Governors? On the Status of Sheshbazzar and Zerubabel in the Persian Empire,” *Henech* 22 (2000) 35–44; cf. A. Lemaire, “Zorobabel et la Judée à la lumière de l’épigraphie (fin du VI^e s. av. J.-C.),” *RB* 103 (1996) 48–57.

29. Edelman, *Origins*, 178–79.

30. This identity was advocated by W. H. Kusters (*Die Wiederherstellung Israels in der persischen Periode* [Heidelberg: Hörning, 1895]) and adopted by Meyer (*Entstehung*, 75ff.), J. Wellhausen (*Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israel* [6th ed.; Berlin: Reimer, 1905] 216 n. 2), and Blenkinsopp (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 78–79), among others; but see P.-R. Berger, “Zu den Namen Ššbšr und Šn’sr,” *ZAW* 83 (1971) 98–100. See A. C. Welch, *Post-Exilic Judaism* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1935) 98ff.; and H. Klinkott, *Der Satrap: Ein Achaimenidischer Amtsträger und seine Handlungsspielräume* (Oikumene 1; Frankfurt: Antike, 2005) 457.

perhaps Damascus.³¹ A reminiscence of Gubarū < **Gaubarva*, the first satrap of Babylonia and Transeuphrates, may be the toponym *Jōbar*, referring to a village northeast of Damascus (now a suburb thereof), provided it is not named after a homonymous Iranian or due to a late “Nachbenennung.”³² The governors succeeding Zerubabel and predating Nehemiah are conveniently listed in Lemaire and Fried,³³ but their dating is tentative and their context unclear. *Bḡwḥy* and *Yḥzqyḥ* postdate Nehemiah.³⁴ The pertinent documentation is now under investigation by O. Lipschits and D. S. Vanderhooft,³⁵ who are due to publish the evi-

31. See Briant, *History* 84–85, 201, 283, 293, 359, 365, 462–63, 487–88.

32. The earliest attestation of the village is from 250 A.H. (= 864/5 C.E.; Yāqūt ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Jacut’s Geographisches Wörterbuch aus den Handschriften zu Berlin, St. Petersburg, Paris, London und Oxford* [ed. F. Wüstenfeld; 6 vols.; Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866–73] 2:138). This would be analogous to the naming of a canal in northern or central Babylonia during the early Achaemenid period after Gubarū, the satrap of Babylonia and Transeuphrates (see my *Geographical Names according to New- and Late-Babylonian Texts* [RGTC 8; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1985] 391; idem, “Notes on Babylonian Geography,” *NABU* [2000/3] 5–6).

The village near Damascus is homonymous with settlements near Nishapur and Baghdad, but because there is no evidence for migrations or deportations from Khorasan or Babylonia to Damascene, there is no need to assume that the name does not predate the Umayyad period. The earliest attestation of its synagogue is from 1522 C.E., but the synagogue may be pre-Ottoman (see B. Lewis, “A Jewish Source on Damascus Just after the Ottoman Conquest,” *BSOAS* 10 [1940] 183–84 with n. 6). In 1660 C.E., it is mentioned by the French traveler L. d’Arvieux (see R. Burns, *Damascus: A History* [London: Routledge, 2005] 230). For the occurrence of the *nisbe* among Damascenes in the first half of the 13th century C.E., see S. Wild, “al-Djawbarī, ‘Abd al-Rahīm,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Supplement* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) 1250. Lewis (“Jewish Source,” 183) mentions that Joseph s. of Isaac Sambari (1640–1703 C.E.) identified the *Jōbar* synagogue with the synagogue of *By Gubr* in the Babylonian Talmud (A. Oppenheimer, B. Isaac, and M. Lecker, *Babylonia Judaica* [TAVO B/47; Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1983] 69). However, this erroneous identification cannot be pre-Medieval. It presumably postdates the destruction of Baghdad and much of Iraq by the Mongols in 1258 C.E. Perhaps only after this catastrophe, which destroyed many ancient sites in Iraq, was *Jōbar* near Damascus identified with the extinct homonymous site in Iraq. This identification was the prerequisite for the transplantation of the tradition concerning the ancient synagogue from Babylonia to Damascene.

33. Lemaire, “Populations et territoires,” 35–36; Fried, *Priest*, 184–85.

34. Ibid., 185; Lemaire, “Épigraphie,” *Transeuphratène* 4 (1991) 117.

35. O. Lipschits and D. S. Vanderhooft, *The Yehud Stamp Impressions: A Corpus of Inscribed Impressions from the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah* (Winnona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011) *passim*.

dence soon. Regarding *šlmyt ʾmt ʾltn*, Meyers³⁶ identifies her with *šlmyt* daughter of Zerubabel (1 Chr 3:19) and argues that she was married to her father's hypothetical successor in office, the governor Elnathan, thereby enhancing the latter's legitimacy. Lemaire³⁷ takes *ʾmt* as a polite form expressing the loyal relationship of the wife toward her husband. However, an expression such as this is unparalleled and unlikely for a female of such a prominent extraction. *šlwmyt* is a common name in the Postexilic Period, which minimizes the plausibility of a physical identity of the homonymous females. In addition, the seal impression is unprovenanced. Meyer's suggestion to identify *ʿnny* descendant of Zerubabel with his namesake, who is mentioned in a letter from Elephantine on 25 Nov. 407 B.C.E., remains just a hypothesis,³⁸ even more so because the name is not rare in the Postexilic Period. Bianchi³⁹ points out that the LXX has 11 generations after Zerubabel, whereas the MT has only 6.

A cardinal problem is which economic niche the returnees were able to occupy upon their arrival in Judea, where conceivably much arable land was occupied by those who remained in the land. In the absence of building projects by the Achaemenid rulers for their interests (for example, fortresses and roads), it is difficult to think of an economic base for the waves of repatriates.⁴⁰ Moreover, from the point of view of material culture, it is impossible to distinguish between the early and late Achaemenid period.⁴¹ The tension between the returnees and those

36. E. M. Meyers, "The Shelomith Seal and the Judean Restoration," *ErIsr* 18 (1985) 31*–38*.

37. Lemaire, "Zorobabel et la Judée," 56–57.

38. E. Meyer, *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine: Dokumente einer jüdischen Gemeinde aus der Perserzeit und das älteste erhaltene Buch der Weltliteratur* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1912) 73. For the letter, see A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923) 30; and B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, vol. 1: *Letters* (Texts and Studies for Students; Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem—Department of the History of the Jewish People, 1986) A4.7, 19 = A4.8, 18. Cf. J. Liver, *The House of David from the Fall of the Kingdom of Judah to the Fall of the Second Commonwealth and after* (Doctoral Dissertation, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1959) 16f. [Hebrew].

39. F. Bianchi, "Le rôle de Zerobabel et de la dynastie davidique en Judée du vi^e siècle au II^e siècle av. J.-C.," *Transeuphratène* 7 (1994) 163.

40. Cf. O. Lipschits, "Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 19–52, esp. p. 32.

41. See Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 265–66. Perhaps some of

who remained is discernible in the postexilic books. Blenkinsopp⁴² cautiously suggests that the returnees brought to Judea Babylonian economic structures and social practices, such as the temple as a holder of lands for its upkeep. The evidence he presented with all due reserve is vague and indirect at best. If we are allowed to pursue the matter further, we may consider the possibility that the fields of the Levites actually belonged to the temple, for employees of a certain domain in Achaemenid Babylonia were allotted small estates from the land of that larger domain.

B. Nehemiah

1. On the Man and His Mission

Nehemiah was identical (according to Neh 10:2) with *htršt'* (Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65, 70). The latter is presumably Nehemiah's Old Iranian alias, **Ātr-š(iy)āta-*, according to Benveniste, and not a title of Nehemiah (as numerous scholars claim), who served at Susa.⁴³ *Htršt'* is hardly an alias of Zerubabel, especially because Zerubabel was brought up in pre-Achaemenid Babylon and bore a non-Hebrew anthroponym (in addition to his Hebrew name, *šmḥ*, provided it is not just symbolic),⁴⁴ thereby lacking a priori a need for a non-Hebrew alias. The form under discussion is conceivably *htršt'* < **h-tršt'* as it was secondarily reinterpreted as a title and therefore preceded by the Hebrew definite article. (*H-* is not

the returnees settled in the Shephelah and the northern Judean hills, as may be suggested by the archaeological find (cf. *ibid.*, 222–69, especially p. 269, table 4.2).

42. J. Blenkinsopp, "Did the Second Jerusalemite Temple Possess Land?" *Transeuphratène* 21 (2001) 61–68.

43. E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en iranien ancien* (Travaux de l'Institut d'études iraniennes de l'Université de Paris I; Paris: Klincksieck, 1966) 120; cf. M. N. Bogolyubov, "Arameyskie Transkripcii Iranskix Ličnix Imen v Elamskix Dokumentax iz Krepostnoy Sten'i Persepol'ya," *Philologia Orientalis* 4 (1976) 214. Ατθαπατης (1 Esdras 5:40; var. Ατθαριας) may go back to *Ατθαρσατης (cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 57). For the theory that this was Nehemiah's title, see J. C. Greenfield, "Tršt'," *Encyclopaedia Biblica Instituti Bialik* 8 (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1982) 946, with previous literature.

44. *šmḥ*: see A. Lemaire, "Zorobabel et la Judée." For the theory that the designation was symbolic, see M. S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Biblical Resource Series; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 156 with literature cited there.

analogous to the Elamite rendering of Old Iranian *a-*.⁴⁵ As for the final *-ʔ*, this is normal in biblical renderings of Old Iranian anthroponyms.⁴⁶) Nehemiah's position in the Achaemenid court in Susa was that of *mšqh hmlk*, "royal cupbearer, royal butler, royal wine steward" (= Aram. *šqy*, extant in *šqyʔ*,⁴⁷ Akkad. *ša-qû < šaqiyu*). Bodi's comparison of *mšqh hmlk* with the Assyrian *rb šqh*⁴⁸ is not accurate, because the latter was the chief cupbearer, whereas Nehemiah was just an ordinary cupbearer. Nehemiah's audience with the king took place in the presence of the queen, as *šgl < Akkad. ša-ekalli* denotes "queen" (CAD E 61–62) rather than "concubine" (as rendered in LXX παλλακή) = Akkad. (*a*)*lahḫinatu > Aram. lhnʔ*.⁴⁹ The news about the situation of the wall of Jerusalem were reported to him by *Hnny* and other Judeans who came to Susa in Kislev (month IX). This indeed falls within the period of the king's residence in Susa (his winter capital). Nehemiah came of age in the Achaemenid royal court. Therefore, he probably was a favorite of the Achaemenids.⁵⁰ His title while he was appointed governor (according to his wish) of Judea is *phh*, originally an Akkadian term (*pīhātu*) that was borrowed in Aramaic from Neo-Assyrian. In the Achaemenid period, there is no clear-cut terminological distinction between a governor of a satrapy and

45. Pace Benveniste, *Titres*, 120.

46. See my "Notes on Esther," ZAW 98 (1986) 106.

47. J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of Northwest Semitic Inscriptions* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 1186–87; B. Mazar, A. Biran, M. Dothan, and I. Dunayevski, "Ein Gev: Excavations in 1961," IEJ 14 (1964) 27. Briant, *History*, 976–77, doubts whether Nehemiah was a cupbearer at all, but he does not elaborate.

48. D. Bodi, "La clémence des Perses envers Néhémie et ses compatriotes: faveur ou opportunisme politique?" *Transeuphratène* 21 (2001) 70.

49. See S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (AS 19; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) 97. The fuller title is *ša ekalli* (É.GAL) *ša šarri* (LUGAL), the designation of *ʾAp-pa-mu-ú*, *ʾPa-am-mu-ú* (with aphaeresis); see my "Achaemenid Queen"; and my "Updating the Apammu Dossier," NABU (2003/33) ad BM 29447.7, 28899.7, and 85009.14 (*ʾAp-pa-mu-ú šá É.GAL š[á LUGAL]*) from 20 Dar. I = 502/1 B.C.E. She must have been wife of Darius I, presumably identical with Ἀπάμια d. of Bazakes, "concubine" of Darius I according to Josephus, *Ant.* 11:54 (ex 3 Esdras 4:29 Ἀπίμη according to F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* [Marburg: Elwert, 1895; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1963] 19a (by oversight not listed in A. S. Shahbazi, "Apamā," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 2 [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987] 150). The contemporary evidence, which supports the denotation "queen" is to be preferred over the later translations with the meaning "concubine." Cf. also K. Radner, *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 1/2: B–G (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1999) 433.

50. See Bodi, "La clémence."

governors of the districts which constitute a satrapy (in this case Trans-euphrates): the Old Iranian term **xšaθra-pāna-* (presumably the Median equivalent of Old Persian *xšaθra-pāvan-*) > Aram. *ʿhšdrpn* can denote any territorial governor. Later on, in the Hellenistic period, a governor of a city and its district (for example, Babylon) is generally described as *pīhātu* (^{lu}NAM or ^{lu}EN.NAM, CAD P 360ff., esp. p. 366b:4c),⁵¹ whereas his implicit superior, who ruled over a satrapy, is called *mumaʿiru* (for example, of Babylonia [“Akkad”]: *lu^{lu}mu-ma-ʿir^{kur}URI^{hi}*).⁵² The latter term might have been in use as early as the Achaemenid period, when its abstract *mumaʿirūtu* is recorded.⁵³ In addition, *pḥh* can denote a functionary of a lower status.⁵⁴ In the same manner, a province and a satrapy are not distinguished in Achaemenid terminology: both are defined as Aram. *mdynh* > Akkad. *madīnatu*.⁵⁵

51. *lu^{lu}pa-h[at] Bābili* (*E^{hi}*) (A. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babyloni*, vol. 2: *Diaries from 261 B.C. to 165 B.C.* [Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften 210; Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989] 330:-187 [188 B.C.E.], rev. 9’); *lu^{lu}pa-ḥat Bābili* (*E^{hi}*) recurs several times in A. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, vol. 3: *Diaries from 164 B.C. to 61 B.C.* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften 247; Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996) 26:-162 [163 B.C.E.], rev. 14, followed by *lu^{lu}šā-kin₇ šā šarri* (*LUGAL*, rev. 15), that is, “royal foreman” (implicitly a royal inspector?) same sequence as *hphwt whsgnym*; cf. the Biblical Aramaic chain of synonyms from ca. 164 B.C.E.: *ʿhšdrpnyʿsgnyʿwphwtʿ*, Dan 3:27 [also Qumran Daq] and *phwt whsgnym whgzbrym* in the very ancient *Mishnah Bikkurim* 3:3, possibly late Achaemenid or early Hellenistic; cf. D. Talshir, “The Forms *ʿahōt* and *ʿedot*,” in *Samaritan, Hebrew and Aramaic Studies Presented to Professor Abraham Tal* (ed. M. Bar-Asher and M. Florentin; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2005) 162–63 with n. 18 and literature cited there [Hebrew]); *lu^{lu}pa-ḥat Bābili* (*E^{hi}*), Sachs and Hunger, *Diaries*, 3:134:-140 [141 B.C.E.], A, rev. 5’; 278:-124 [125 B.C.E.], B, rev. 17’; 312:-119 [120 B.C.E.], B, rev. C, 11’; 326:-118 [119 B.C.E.], A, rev. 19; 436:-90 [91 B.C.E.], 30’ [generally followed by “the citizens who are in Babylon”: *lu^{lu}pu-li-ṭe-e šā AŠ E^{ki}*]).

52. *Ibid.*, 3:50:-158, B, rev. 17’22’.

53. See M. W. Stolper, “Iranians in Babylonia,” *JAOS* 114 (1994) 621a ad 5.

54. A certain Mun-da-par-nu was *pīhātu* (^{lu}NAM) of another *pīhātu* in a deed from 308/7 B.C.E. (R. J. van der Spek, *Grondbezit in het Seleucidische Rijk* [Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1986] viii, 6).

55. E.g., *kur^{kur}ma-di-na-at šā kur^{kur}ma-da-A+A* (Sachs and Hunger, *Diaries*, 3:168:-137 [138 B.C.E.], C, rev. 17’; 460:-86 [87 B.C.E.], B, Flake, 10’); *kur^{kur}ma-di-na-at šā NIM.MA^{ki}* (Sachs and Hunger, *Diaries* 3.164:-137 [138 B.C.E.], rev. 21’) referring to Media and Elam respectively. *KASKAL^{II} A-ra-bi a-na ma-di-na-at šā xx^I* (Sachs and Hunger, *Diaries* 3.108:-143 [144 B.C.E.], C, “Flake,” 7’) rendered as “the Arabi road to the province of.”

Nehemiah's first period of office in Judea is datable between 445 and 433 B.C.E. (but the suggestion of Heltzer has no chronological value according to Stolper).⁵⁶ The recent thesis of Edelman, namely, that Nehemiah was a special envoy overseeing building works in Jerusalem during the governorship of Zerubabel, is totally unacceptable (for example, Edelman's emendation of 1 Chr 3:17–18 is arbitrary).⁵⁷ Nehemiah as the restorer of the temple (2 Macc 1:10–2:18) is a later founder legend,⁵⁸ perhaps motivated by a Hasmonean tendency to belittle the achievements of the Zadokite priests. In addition, this remarkable non-Davidide governor⁵⁹ might have served as a model of imitation for the Hasmonean rulers. It is highly unlikely that Artaxerxes would have tolerated a Davidide governor of Judea. Nehemiah's salary was financed by taxes from his own district.⁶⁰ Apart from his claim that he regularly fed 150 Judeans and foremen (*sgnym*; plus foreign visitors), there is very little information about Nehemiah's retinue. However, the quantities of food consumed in his household exceed the dietary needs of 150 individuals and may indicate that the number of people he fed exceeded 600.⁶¹ In this case, it can be surmised that they included his trained servants (*n'rym*, lit., "boys"), who formed the militia. From what we know of other Achaemenid governors (usually satraps), they kept a tribunal, scribes, and messengers.⁶² *Hnnyh*, who served as the prefect (*šr*) of the acropolis (citadel, *byrh*; cf. Akkad. *rab bīrti*, Old Iranian **dizapati*-) of Jerusalem, is probably to be differentiated from *Hnny*, a biological brother or just a colleague of Nehemiah. *Hnnyh*, who is mentioned after *Hnny*, is hardly a dittography of *Hnny* (not identical with his namesake from Elephantine)⁶³ if one keeps in mind that biblical narratives give

56. M. Heltzer, "The Flogging and Plucking of Beards in the Achaemenid Empire and the Chronology of Nehemia," *AMI* 28 (1995–96) 305–7; M. W. Stolper, "Flogging and Plucking," *Topoi Suppl.* 1 (1997) 347–50.

57. Edelman, *Origins* 2–3, 10, 151ff., 176 for the emendation of 1 Chr 3:17–18, see p. 21.

58. *Nehemiah as resotrer*: *ibid.*, 144. *Later founder legend*: see L. L. Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998) 88–89, 188.

59. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 204–5.

60. See Klinkott, *Satrap*, 202.

61. See Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 246–47; cf. H. G. M. Williamson, "Non-Israelite Written Sources," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books* (ed. B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005) 742:2.3.4.

62. Cf. Klinkott, *Satrap*, *passim*.

63. *Dittography of Hnny*: see C. G. Tuland, "Hanani–Hananiah," *JBL* 77 (1958) 157–61; *Namesake from Elephantine*: see H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 171.

first the full name of a key figure and only later his hypocoristicon (e.g., in the story of Micah, he is introduced as *Mykyhw* and only later in the story is he referred to as *Mykh*: Judg 17:1, 4, 5, 9; 18:2–4, 13, 15, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 31, respectively). Hananiah is not necessarily the same individual as the homonymous son of Zerubabel, seeing that the name is very common in the Postexilic Period.⁶⁴ Functionaries bearing the title *śr plk* are mentioned in the list of the wall builders. They controlled teams of workmen. Their title seems to be the equivalent of Neo-Assyrian *rab pilkāni*, “overseer of wall construction” (sg. *pilku* “work assignment for building walls” > *plk*⁶⁵). These functionaries are always attached to certain settlements, which presumably served as administrative centers. Therefore, Demsky’s suggestion did not convince most scholars, who retain the denotation “district” for *plk*. However, it should be remembered that Akkad. *pilku* denotes “boundary,” not “district”; *pilkātu*, “district,” is recorded only in the Old Babylonian period (CAD P 374a s.v. *pilku* A, 2). To suggest that Pethahiah son of Mesheza-bel “(who was) at the king’s hand” (that is, his adviser) was a local official representing the inhabitants of Judea at the Persian royal court or an emissary of Nehemiah,⁶⁶ one must take into account that it is probably a late addition of the Chronicler. The royal reserve (*prds*) is to be sought in northern Lebanon, where there is evidence for a large royal estate in a region rich in cedars during the Roman period.⁶⁷ These estates are a phenomenon of the *longue durée*. If it was in Judea, then it was certainly not located near arid Herodium,⁶⁸ whose modern survival *Frēdis* might go back to a vulgar form of Ἡρώδειον, *Hurdys* or similar in the mouth of the Semitic-speaking population (with Arabic reinterpretation). In short, this form, which is not rare in modern Palestinian toponymy, is not a continuation of Achaemenid *prds*. A location in Judea makes sense only if the governor of this district needs permission from the imperial

64. *Son of Zerubabel*: pace Edelman, *Origins*, 26; *this name common in the Post-exilic Period*: see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah* 207; in Edelman, *Origins* 27, last par. read *Ḥnnh* instead of *Ḥnnyh*.

65. See A. Demsky, “Pelekh in Nehemiah 3,” *IEJ* 33 (1983) 242–44.

66. *Pethahiah son of Meshezabel*: see Liver, *Chapters in the History* 75; *Emissary of Nehemiah*: see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah* 327 and M. Heltzer, “Neh 11:24 and the provincial representative at the Persian royal court,” *Transeuphratène* 8 (1994) 112.

67. Cf. R. da Riva, “Desde la muralla de Media a los cedros del Líbano: Unos apuntes de geografía del Próximo Oriente antiguo,” *Geografía Antiqua* 18 (2009) 217–26.

68. Pace A. Jepsen, “Pardes,” *ZDPV* 74 (1958) 64–68.

government to exploit resources in his own district. The guardian of the royal reserve, *ʾsp*, might have been either a Phoenician or a Judean, seeing that the verbal root *ʾsp* is productive in both the Phoenician and Hebrew onomasticons.

When Nehemiah asks the king to give him permission for a leave of absence from the court in order to fulfill his mission in Judea, he depicts the situation of Jerusalem in strong terms: the city is ruined and its gates burned. This kind of dramatization is well known from Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, where the contrast between a previous situation and the results of the protagonist's achievements is highlighted. The same is true about his comparison between the oppressive and exploiting governors who preceded him and his own consideration. The "governor's bread" (*lḥm hphḥ*) reminds one of the tax named "the king's flour" (*qēme ša šarri*) in the late Achaemenid period (CAD Q 208–9) and the tax of *hirgalû* flour in the early Achaemenid period.⁶⁹ This is not to say that the taxes were identical, especially because the "governor's bread" was for the maintenance of the local apparatus, whereas the "king's flour" apparently paid for the upkeep of the central administration, notably the royal court; but the terminology is similar. On the whole, there is a consensus about the authenticity of the NM.⁷⁰ The chronology and prosopography contained in NM generally fit the historical constellation. This memoir was written as an apology of Nehemiah for posterity and for his contemporaries probably including his

69. BM 17668 from Borsippa, 19.I.5 Cambyses = 525/4 B.C.E.; archive of Atkuppū (*Nabû-šuma-ušur* [or *nādīn-ahi*] s. of Marduk-[- . . .]); receipt of silver, *nidittu ša qašti pānat qašti* and *hirgalû*-flour (all taxes) for year 4 of Cambyses = 526/5 B.C.E. received by Iqīšā s. of Aplā descendant of Bānē-ša-iliya; it is also stated that the fodder of Rēmūtu is paid. BM 85626 from Borsippa, 21 (or 24), principal: *Nabû-šuma-iškun* is a promissory note for *hirgalû*-flour tax for year 4 (526/5 B.C.E.). BM 82802 records *hirgalû* flour (tax?) of year 28 (possibly of Darius I = 494/3 B.C.E.). The *hirgalû* tax of the Borsippans for the year 505/4 B.C.E. was collected by the summoners (sg. *dēkū*) and the canal inspectors (sg. *gugallu*) of Borsippa, who delivered it to the royal palace (possibly in Babylon; see M. Jursa, "Palast, A.w8b.Neubabylonisch," *RIA* 10 (2004) 210b ad BM 21965) in 504/3 B.C.E.

70. See Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 160; and T. Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias: Zur literarischen Eigenart, traditionsgeschichtlichen Prägung und innerbiblischen Rezeption des Ich-Berichts Nehemia* (OBO 183; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002) 335f. NM does not conform to the genre of fictional autobiography, unlike Qoheleth, which is very different and does resemble this sort of fiction, according to T. Longman III (*Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991] 202).

superiors—in the first place, the great king. Certain actions and practices of his have contemporary parallels: in Caria, a governor was in a position to grant exemption from taxes aiming at financing his own household, that is, on the level of the district, but not to grant any exemption from royal taxation.⁷¹ Jesus ben Sirach, who lived in the end of the Ptolemaic rule in Jerusalem (first quarter of the third century B.C.E.), praises Nehemiah as the builder of the walls of Jerusalem (Sir 49:13), a point that supports dating the construction in the pre-Hellenistic age, that is, the late Achaemenid period. The construction of the wall is a central theme of the NM and was remembered by later generations more than Nehemiah's reforms and piety. Admittedly, archaeological evidence is still absent, as demonstrated by Finkelstein.⁷² It would be prudent to wait for further investigations of the whole relevant terrain before reaching a final verdict.⁷³

Lipschits⁷⁴ points out that the existence of the temple in a fortified and populated Jerusalem encouraged the move of the Judean capital from Mizpah to Jerusalem (with a Persian inspection center in Ramat-Rahel), whose temple has become the fiscal center of Judea. The date of this important development cannot be established, but the fact that Mizpah is associated with the throne of the satrap of Transeuphrates in the list of the wall builders may supply a terminus ante quem, that is, the inspection center (which was staffed by satrapal and royal functionaries) did not exist before the second half of the fifth century B.C.E. It might have taken some time, especially because the existence of a temple city along with a different capital is not necessarily an anomaly in the ancient Near East. Analogous cases are the capitals of Bīt-Agūsi (Arnē and Arpad) near the ancient temple city of Aleppo, and the temple city of Assur coexisting with the later imperial capitals of Calah, Dūr-Šarrukēn, and Nineveh. The fact that there are no *yehud* stamps of Nehemiah (observed by Heltzer⁷⁵) should not be overestimated. For there is no

71. See M. Heltzer, "Again on Some Problems of the Achaemenid Taxation in the Province of Judea," *AMI* 25 (1992) 173–75.

72. See I. Finkelstein, "Jerusalem in the Persian Period and the Wall of Nehemiah," in *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 B.C.E.)* (ed. O. Lipschits and L. L. Grabbe; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007) 10–11.

73. See O. Lipschits, "The Size and Status of Jerusalem in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods," in *ibid.*, 15.

74. Idem, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 214f.

75. M. Heltzer, "Zu einem Verwaltungsproblem in den Provinzen der der V. Satrapie des Achämenidenreiches," *AoF* 22 (1995) 70–72

definite proof that the individuals recorded in these stamps are necessarily the governors themselves or their functionaries or employees (cf. the case of Yl son of Yš⁶, a functionary from about the beginning of the fourth century B.C.E.⁷⁶). Nehemiah tolerated neither internal nor external opposition. However, Nehemiah's lack of diplomatic skills and his harsh reaction (as pointed out by Grabbe⁷⁷), is to be understood against the background of the accusations and incitement of his prominent and influential adversaries, which were too grave to be handled with other measures.

Nehemiah's behavior is what one expects of a governor in a state of emergency given the urgency of the restoration of the wall under constant harassment. It should be remembered that his three main adversaries belonged to dynasties of potentates who flanked Judea on almost every side for generations. It is well known that the Achaemenids discouraged the formation of hereditary governorships.⁷⁸ In addition, it is discernible from NM and Nehemiah's acts that his special mission might have served Persian interests. It was argued that Nehemiah, who came of age in the Achaemenid royal court, probably was a collaborator of the Achaemenids, like other prominent foreigners with similar backgrounds. His commission to build the citadel of Jerusalem might have been motivated by the proximity of Judea to turbulent Egypt and perhaps by a royal need to use it as refuge for the Persian forces.⁷⁹ It was not long after the remnants of the Persian army defeated by the Egyptian rebels retreated to the citadel of Memphis in 460 B.C.E. (Avishur and Heltzer assume that the wall of Jerusalem was destroyed sometime during Megabyzus's rebellion but admit that there is no explicit evidence.⁸⁰)

Jerusalem is situated on Graf's map on a hypothetical royal road, but there is no explicit evidence for that in the sources.⁸¹ Knowing that he

76. Lemaire, "Épigraphie," 117. The only governors (sg. *phw'*) on the *Yhd* impressions are arguably *ʿhb* and *Yhwʿzr* (both early type, late 6th through early 5th centuries B.C.E.; see Lipschits and Vanderhooft, *Yehud Stamp Impressions*, 82–106, 192–201).

77. See recently Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 161–62.

78. See L. S. Fried, "The Political Struggle of Fifth-Century Judah," *Transeuphratène* 24 (2002) 61–73.

79. *Proximity to Judea to Egypt*: see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 214–15; *Refuge for Persian forces*: see Bodi, "La clémence," 77.

80. Y. Avishur and M. Heltzer, "The Scribe and Priest Ezra: A Leader under Achaemenian Rule," *Transeuphratène* 29 (2005) 17–36; cf. Briant, *History*, 976.

81. D. F. Graf, "The Persian Royal Road System in Syria-Palestine," *Transeuphratène* 6 (1993) 167, fig. d; cf. p. 160 with n. 50.

was serving Persian interests, Nehemiah took the initiative and was able to contain the adversarial aspirations of neighboring provincial governors as well as the resistance of Judean dignitaries, notably Tobiah.

Tobiah, whose power base was in the border of Ammon with the Peraia (presumably governor of Ammon), married a daughter of Shecaniah descendant of Arah (not a priestly clan;⁸² there is no evidence that Šm'yh was son of Šknyh). His son, Jehohanan, married the daughter of Meshullam s. of Berechiah, probably a priest. In the interval between the first and the second periods of Nehemiah as a governor, Tobiah, an ally of the high priest Eliashib, occupied an important position in the management of the temple in Jerusalem. The initiative to meet Nehemiah in the Vale of Ono was made by Sanballat and Geshem, whereas Tobiah, who was part of the local scene in Judea, had diverse channels of communication with Nehemiah. No wonder Tobiah's plots and provocations are described in more detail. The Vale of Ono was partially colonized by Judeans but was on the border of the Samaria province with the hinterland of Jaffa. The region of Jaffa and the province of Dor were granted to the Sidonian king Eshmunazzar by an unnamed Achaemenid king presumably sometime in the end of 6th or the beginning of the 5th century B.C.E.⁸³ Dor had been Israelite before it became an Assyrian province in 732 B.C.E. and the region of Jaffa (including *Bīt-Da-gan-na*, *Ba-na-A* + *A-bar-qa*, and *A-zu-ru*) was originally an Ashkelonite enclave, which came under direct imperial control in 701 B.C.E. when Sennacherib crushed the rebellion of Šidqâ, king of Ashkelon.⁸⁴ Imperial possessions such as these were inherited by the successive empires, namely, the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid. If—and only if—*Kpyrym* means “villages” in view of the word *kpyrym* in several oriental manuscripts of the MT and LXX κώμαι,⁸⁵ then it is an appellative rather than a toponym referring to a concrete settlement. In this case, Sanballat and Geshem did not refer to a well-defined spot of the proposed meeting,

82. Pace Edelman, *Origins*, 23.

83. Cf. Briant, *History*, 490.

84. D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (OIP 2; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924) 31, 69–70; E. Frahm, *Einleitung in die Sanherib-Inschriften* (AfOB 26; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1997) 53, 59a; cf. M. J. Allen, *Contested Peripheries: Philistia in the Neo-Assyrian World System* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1997) 267; N. Na'aman, “Two Notes on the History of Ashkelon and Ekron in the Late Eighth-Seventh Centuries B.C.E.,” *Tel Aviv* 25 (1998) 222–23.

85. Is *kpyr* here a diminutive (originally a Northwest Semitic equivalent of the Arab. *qutayl* formation) of *kpr*?

which implies that their proposal is to be understood as an exploratory measure. Geshem and the Ashdodites acted only in concert with the two main adversaries of Nehemiah, Tobiah and Sanballat. There is no need to assume (as does Williamson, with due reserve⁸⁶) that Tobiah acted as a high-ranking official of Sanballat, who allegedly was the governor of both Samaria and Judea before Nehemiah. As governors of adjacent districts, they had interests in neighboring Judea. The suggestion that the wall of Jerusalem was destroyed by an Arabian raid⁸⁷ and that the notables of Tekoa did not cooperate in the construction due to Arabian pressure are mere speculation.

There were recurrent Arabian infiltrations into the Fertile Crescent during the age of empires (Neo-Assyrian through Parthian). These annual events are recorded in the Parthian period.⁸⁸ Generally, they did not involve nearly total destruction of city walls. Work gangs from Beth-Zur, which was adjacent to the zone controlled by the Arabians (later Idumea), did participate in the construction of the wall of Jerusalem. This weakens the case of Arabian pressure on Tekoa, which was situated inside Judean territory not very close to the Arabian zone (which preceded the formation of the province of Idumea sometime between 385 and 363 B.C.E. according to Lemaire⁸⁹). The Harranite origin of Sanballat *hḥrny* was first suggested by Klostermann.⁹⁰ The mission of the Achaemenid court favorite and collaborator Nehemiah took place in the context of perennial rebellions by western satraps. Last but not least, a radical social and agrarian reform⁹¹ was beyond the capacity of Nehemiah, who was not a sovereign ruler.

The complaints of the impoverished Judeans are presented in order of severity: first those who had to put up their children as surety, then those who had landed property, which was mortgaged. Both groups did what they did to buy grain during a famine. Last were those who

86. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, xlv, 243.

87. See M. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1987) 127–28.

88. See my “Notes on Babylonian Geography and Prosopography,” *NABU* (1997/6) 6.

89. A. Lemaire, “Épigraphie et religion en Palestine à l’époque achéménide,” *Transeuphratène* 22 (2001) 111.

90. A. Klostermann, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel bis zur Restauration unter Esra und Nehemia* (Munich: Beck, 1896) 262–63; for other possibilities, see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 216, but Hawran seems less likely, because the relevant Neo-Assyrian province was named Qarnini.

91. Cf. Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 163–64.

mortgaged their landed property for the money they borrowed in order to pay the royal tax (Neh 5:1–4). *Tax* (sg.) here is a general term, as there were various royal taxes in the Achaemenid period.⁹² De Castelbajac assumes that Nehemiah's social measures conform to the ideology of the Josianic Deuteronomist rather than to those of the later, exilic Deuteronomist.⁹³ What was Nehemiah's local base of power? Which niche did he find or try to arrange for himself? The material at hand is not sufficient to answer these important questions.

It is hardly deniable that the returnees were his favorite group. There is no explicit contradistinction of this privileged group from the Judean *ḥrym*, "nobles, hereditary notables," but it stands to reason that the latter group consisted also of prominent Judeans who remained in the land during the Exile. Smith, followed by Schaper and Eskenazi, is of the opinion that one of the groups supporting Nehemiah were the Levites, especially in view of the opposition that Nehemiah faced from aristocratic and priestly circles.⁹⁴

2. *The Wall Builders*

The list of the wall builders is hardly the Chronicler's invention.⁹⁵ Wellhausen⁹⁶ observed that *'mr(y) / 'mryh* from the end of the period of the Divided Kingdom is identical with *'mr* and that Hattush son of *Ḥšbnyh* is not to be differentiated from Hattush son of *Šknyh* in Chronicles and the list of the repatriates who joined Ezra (attributed to the Chronicler: *Šbnyh* < *Šknyh*). Hattush is described as a Davidide there. Wellhausen's opinion was accepted by Rothstein and Batten.⁹⁷ There is a scholarly consensus that he was identical with Hattush in two lists of priests (Neh 10:5, 12:2), where he is juxtaposed with *Šb/knyh*.⁹⁸ Liver

92. See Briant, *History*, 391, 405–6, 412, 421–22.

93. I. de Castelbajac, "Les sources deutéronomistes de la figure royale de Néhémie," *Transeuphratène* 30 (2005) 65–76.

94. Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics* 50, 134–35, 152; J. Schaper, *Priester und Leviten im achämenidischen Juda* (FAT 31; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 226ff.; T. C. Eskenazi, "The Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 509–30, esp. pp. 513–17.

95. *Wall builders*: Demsky, "Pelekh"; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 231.

96. Wellhausen, "Rückkehr," 171–72.

97. J. W. Rothstein, *Die Genealogie des König Jojachin und seiner Nachkommen* (1Chron. 3, 17–24) in *geschichtlicher Beleuchtung* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1902) 93ff.; Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 318.

98. Cf. A. Jepsen, "Nehemia 10," ZAW 66 (1954) 87–88.

doubted the identity of Hattush in Nehemiah with his namesake from the Chronicler's sources, arguing that one would expect more genealogical details and titles of Hattush in an elaborate list such as that of the wall builders.⁹⁹ However, it should not be forgotten that only the Chronicler mentions the late postexilic Davidides. *Bwy* < *Bw*(*n*)*y*, in all probability a Levite, was a high official of half a *plk* of the non-Levitic town of Keilah, according to Neh 3:18. There is strong evidence that the notion of Levitic towns is Utopian. This is not necessarily contradictory, as he might have acted as an official in a non-Levitic settlement. The construction and repair of walls as a communal effort is well-known from contemporary Athens¹⁰⁰ and Babylonia. For instance, the production of bricks that belonged to the Borsippa temple complex (Ezida) to construct walls was undertaken by members of prominent Borsippa clans, who were prebendaries of Ezida (BM 17670, 26479, 26625, 26705, 82777, and other documents from the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C.E.).¹⁰¹

The length of the various sections of the Jerusalem wall assigned to each individual/group is not indicated. These calculations are merely based on the number of sections. 7.31% of the wall was explicitly built by priests. The actual percentage is 24.39% if one adds the sections built by Meremoth, Meshullam, Zakkur, Hattush, and Zadok, who also were priests. (It cannot be proven that the other Zadok and Azariah, who built 4.87% of the wall, were priests.). In the same manner, the Levites *Bny*, Rehum, and the gatekeeper *Šm* *ʿyh* built 7.31% of the wall, but this percentage can reach 14.62% if one adds Hashabiah (participated in his capacity as official of half a *plk* of Keilah), Ezer (participated in his capacity as official of Mizpah) and Hananiah (a hypothetical gatekeeper). The fact that Ezer is listed immediately after *Bny* in a section devoted to Levites suggests that he was a Levite as well. Ezer and Shallun are defined as an official of Mizpah and an official in charge of the *plk* of Mizpah, respectively. We may assume that each of them was in charge of half a *plk*. Altogether, the temple personnel built 34.13–36.58% (if not 43.88%) of the wall. Was Meshullam, who shared a section of 2.43%

99. Liver, *The House of David*, 14–15.

100. See Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics*, 129–30; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 232–33.

101. See C. Waerzeggers and M. Jursa, "Money-Based Exchange and Redistribution: The Transformation of the Institutional Economy in First Millennium Babylonia," in *Autour de Polanyi: Vocabulaires, théories et modalités des échanges* (ed. P. Clancier, F. Joannès, P. Rouillard, and A. Tenu; Colloques de la Maison René-Ginouvès 1; Paris: de Boccard, 2005) 175.

of the wall with Joiada, a Levite as well? It is stated that Baruch built a second section from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest (2.43%). The goldsmiths (*šrpym*) who built (together with the peddlers), 7.31% of the wall, might have been associated with the temple.¹⁰² Merchants are not mentioned presumably because the commerce was basically in the hands of the Tyrians. The only other artisans who participated were the perfumers (*rqhym*, 2.43%). They might have been employed by the temple as well. Together with the officials, they built 21.95% (actually 24.38% if one includes Hashabiah, who is calculated among the Levites) of the wall. The inhabitants of Jericho and Tekoa built 2.43% and 4.87%, respectively. Other participants, who belonged neither to the royal officialdom nor to the temple personnel (Malchijah, Hashshub, Pedaiah, as well as the anonymous descendants of Sn'h), contributed 9.75%. The remainder (4.87%) was built by owners of houses adjacent to the wall (explicitly: *Bnymn* and *Ḥashshub* as well as Azariah and Zadok, who were calculated above in connection with the priests). On the whole, it stands to reason that the participants had a direct and immediate interest in a prompt construction of the wall. Jedaiah (2.43%) is intrusive; he participated presumably because he owned a nearby house. The same applies to Palal (2.43%). The temple personnel and other individuals, who were related to it built more than a half of the wall.¹⁰³ The use of the servants to form a militia conforms

102. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 239. Goldsmiths were closely associated with the Eanna Temple in late Chaldean and early Achaemenid Uruk, as well as with the Rēš Temple of Uruk during the Seleucid period (217–158 B.C.E.); cf. P. Corò, *Prebende templari in età seleucide* (History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 8; Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2005) 331ff. ad *ērib bīt pīristūtu u kutimmūtu*, especially pp. 335–36, where only *kutimmūtu*, that is, the goldsmith's prebend, is recorded. This association dates to perhaps as early as the "Chaldean" and early Achaemenid periods (for Sippar, see cautiously A. C. V. M. Bongenaar, *The Neo-Babylonian Ebabbar Temple, Sippar: Its Administration and Its Prosopography* [PIHANS 80; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1997] 142, 363–64). They and the perfumers appear as surnames in Judea in the Postexilic Period; does it imply that they belonged to the personnel of the Jerusalem temple? On the other hand, the possibility that the temple used the services of independent artisans cannot be excluded. The name of the modern village of *Šūrīf* (> *Šurīf*), within a day's march from Jerusalem, derives from Hebrew *Šōrēp*, "goldsmith," and therefore must have been coined before Aramaic became the vernacular in this region. Was it originally an abode of goldsmiths working for the Jerusalem temple?

103. See Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 168ff.; M. Cogan, "Raising the Walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:1–32): The View from Dur-Sharruken," *IEJ* 56

to an NB/LB practice: a militia consisting mainly of bowmen accompanied workmen of the temple sector (notably the temples of Eanna in Uruk and Ebabbarra in Sippar), who were employed in estates relatively far from the temple.¹⁰⁴

3. The Census List

Nehemiah 7 seems to be closer to the original version of the census (*mspr*) list¹⁰⁵ than Ezra 2 is. Contrary to the other lists in Ezra–Nehemiah, the census list does not start with priests and Levites. The heading of the census list records 12 leaders of several repatriate waves. This is an archetypal number that should not be taken at face value but reduced by at least three: *Nḥmny* is a secondary addition based on *Nḥmyh*. *Nḥwm* (> Ezra *Rḥwm* is secondary) may be inspired by *Nḥmyh* and *Mspṛt* (Neh 7:7) = *Mspṛ* (Ezra 2:2) is possibly influenced by the appellative *mspr* in the headline.¹⁰⁶ Meyer's opinion that the list is considerably earlier than Ezra¹⁰⁷ cannot be maintained in view of the headline. Marquart was of the opinion that, in view of the occurrence of the Iranian name *Bgwy*, the list originated not long before Nehemiah (there are more Iranian names in this list).¹⁰⁸ Zerubabel, Nehemiah, and Bigwai were governors and therefore were regarded as leaders of successive repatriate waves by the editor who incorporated this list into the book of Nehemiah. He paired Zerubabel with his coeval high priest Jeshua and Nehemiah with Azariah, who might have been a contemporary prominent priest. The remaining individuals listed in the heading were inserted in order to obtain the typological number of 12 leaders. Wellhausen stated that the list is not earlier than Nehemiah, and Mowinckel dated it to ca. 400 B.C.E.¹⁰⁹ This or a slightly later date (with the governorship of Bigwai as its terminus post quem) would be more likely if the headline is an integral part of the list or at least not much later than it. Grintz was of the opinion that the Mishnaic source (Taanith 4:4f.), which regards *Pr'š*, *'rh*, *Phṭ-Mw'b*, *Ztw'*, and *'dyn* as Judahites and *Sn'h* as a Benjaminite, is very

(2006) 84–85, 90–91

104. See Bongenaar, *Ebabbar*, 131ff.

105. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 83ff., 159–60.

106. See cautiously Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 24 n. 2.e.

107. Meyer, *Entstehung*, 191.

108. J. Marquart, *Fundamente israelitischer und jüdischer Geschichte* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1896) 35–36.

109. Wellhausen, "Rückkehr," 177–78; Mowinckel, *Studien*, passim; cf. A. Cody, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood* (Analecta Biblica 35; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969); Lipschits, "Achaemenid," 33.

early.¹¹⁰ Yet, this is not an independent source. The very late date advocated by Lebram¹¹¹ is unacceptable, especially because several members of this list recur in relatively early sources: *ʾrh* in NM and *Prʿš*, *ʾrh*, *Ph̄t-Mwʾb*, *Zky*, *Hrym*, and *Snʾh* in the list of wall builders. Was the eponym of the clan *Ph̄t-Mwʾb* a hypothetical Jewish governor of Moab during the early Achaemenid period (or slightly earlier), historically analogous to Tobiah, the Jewish governor of Ammon?¹¹² *Bsy* is possibly a Judahite rather than a Benjaminite clan in view of the settlement Βηθβασι/Βαιτοβαισσαια southeast of Bethlehem (modern Ḥirbit Bét Baṣṣa) in the Hasmonean and Roman periods (occupation starts in the Hellenistic period¹¹³). This toponym might have been named after the clan (< **Byt Bsy*, that is, “*Bsy*’s place”). Josephus (*Ant.* 11:71) gives the number of the rejected priests as 525 (not in the OT¹¹⁴). This is in accord with his tendency as a priest to elaborate on priestly matters. Most of the names of the nethinim reveal their foreign origin, presumably mainly from prisoners of war from Judah’s neighbors in the end of the period of the divided kingdom.¹¹⁵ Briend’s view that the Gibeonite tetrapolis (in source P), whose inhabitants were servants in temple of Jerusalem, does not predate the Achaemenid period¹¹⁶ cannot be maintained. People of this tetrapolis are listed among the Israelite inhabitants of other settlements in the census list without a special designation. The Gibeonite Melatiah (Neh 3:7) is listed among the wall builders.

110. Y. M. Grintz, “From Zerubabel to Nehemiah,” *Zion* 37 (1972) 128ff. [Hebrew]

111. J. C. H. Lebram, “Die Traditionsgeschichte der Esragestalt und die Frage nach dem historischen Esra,” in *Achaemenid History: Sources, Structure and Synthesis. Proceedings of the Groningen 1983 Achaemenid History Workshop* (ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1987) 103–38.

112. See my “On the Reliability of the Genealogical and Prosopographical Lists of the Israelites in the Old Testament,” *Tel Aviv* 25 (1998) 234–35; S. Mittmann, “Tobia, Sanballat und die persische Provinz Juda,” *JNSL* 26/2 (2000) 25–26.

113. M. Kochavi, ed., *Judea, Samaria and the Golan: Archaeological Survey 1967–1968* (Jerusalem: Archaeological Survey of Israel and Carta, 1972) 42:29 [Hebrew].

114. See R. Marcus, *Josephus with an English Translation: Antiquitates Iudaeorum Books 5–8 and 9–11* (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934–37) 347 note g.

115. Cf. my “Notes on the Biblical and Extra-Biblical Onomasticon,” *JQR* 71 (1980) 107–17.

116. J. Briend, “Gabaon à l’époque perse,” *Transeuphratène* 5 (1992) 9–20.

4. The Signatories of the Covenant

For the arrangement of these signatories after the text of the covenant, see Blenkinsopp.¹¹⁷ It is noteworthy that, in certain NB/LB documents, the list of witnesses precedes the operative section of the deed (the practice is already recorded in Old Babylonian).¹¹⁸ *Šdqyh* was possibly an important personality (high official? not a priest according to Rudolph; pace Sellin).¹¹⁹ 3 Esdras has υἱός Σαραία, in which case he might be an instance of quasi-papponymy, as he may be a descendant of *Yhwšdq* (s. of *Šryh*), which is possibly the same name in reverse (disregarding the vocalization of the predicative element).¹²⁰ Gunneweg considers the possibility that “*Šryh*’s son” refers to Ezra.¹²¹ Torrey tried to prove that *Šdqyh* is a Chronicler’s invention.¹²² One suspects that the list of signatories contains an interpolation, namely, *ʿznyh*, corrupted forms (*ʿnyh/ʿnn*, *Ḥšbnyh/Šbnyh/Šknyh*, and *Šb/knyh*), and repetitions. The word *ʿbdyh* in the Priestly section is probably due to the Chronicler’s intentional insertion of the Levite *ʿbdyh/ʿbd*,¹²³ where the priest *ʿdy* is expected. Do the short and isolated forms *Plhʾh* and *Šlp*, which have two letters (*p*, *l*) in common, refer to the same individual?

5. The Participants in the Procession

The participants belong to Levi, except for, possibly, Hoshaiiah, Azariah, Meshullam, and Shemaiah (read <<w>>*mbny hkhnym* with Blenkinsopp¹²⁴ ad Neh 12:35). These four individuals were probably not

117. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 46, 312–13.

118. For NB/LB documents, see, e.g., A. T. Clay, *Legal and Commercial Transactions, Dated in the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods, Chiefly from Nippur* (BE 8/1; Philadelphia: Department of Archaeology–University of Pennsylvania, 1908) 80. For Old Babylonian, see W. F. Leemans, “Textes paléo-babyloniens commençants par une liste des personnes,” in *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs: Études sur la civilisation mésopotamienne offertes à Paul Garelli* (ed. D. Charpin and F. Joannès; Paris: Recherches sur les civilisations, 1991) 307–32.

119. W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955) 163 n. 4; E. Sellin, *Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Völker* 2 (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1932) 160–61.

120. In contrast, M. Friedlaender, *Genealogische Studien zum Alten Testament*, vol. 1: *Die Veränderlichkeit der Namen in den Stammlisten der Bücher der Chronik* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1903) 40.

121. Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 130 ad loc.

122. C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (Library of Biblical Studies; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910; repr., New York: Ktav, 1970) 283.

123. Cf. J. R. Porter, “Son or Grandson (Ezra x.6)?” *JTS* 17 (1966) 57–58.

124. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 343.

merely Levites but priests. This seems to be corroborated by the prosopographic evidence. Judah and Benjamin (Neh 12:34) should be placed at the end of v. 32 seeing that *Yhwḏh* in Neh 12:34¹²⁵ is interpolated from Neh 12:32. *Bnymn* should not be emended to *Mymn*). Eliakim, Maaseiah, and Zechariah are priest-trumpeters, whereas Zechariah, Azarel, *Mlly*, *Mʿy*, Nethanel, and Hanani are musicians (but only Zechariah and Azarel may be original). Regarding Shemaiah, Elam, and Ezer, there is good reason for thinking that all were priests. They are listed together with Malchijah (Jer 38:1), Johanan, Uzzi, and Elazar. *Mʿoyh* and *Šmʿy h* (originally the same individual with graphic metathesis?) can be identical with their namesakes, who are also listed together (Ezra 10:21). *ʿylm* is possibly originally a gentilic (< **ʿlmy*) of the priestly town Ale-meth (*ʿlmn/t*, and the homonymous non-Levite clan in the census list, whose name resembles this toponym¹²⁶). Elam may be identical with his namesake (Neh 3:19). The latter's father (*Yšwʿ*) is not necessarily identical with the homonymous Levite (e.g., Neh 7:43) but may refer to the homonymous priestly clan (Neh 7:39). The Chronicler's identification of Elioenai, Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Elam, Ezer, and Johanan (Neh 13:42) with Levitical clans is late, secondary, and irrelevant for the discussion here. His tendency to stress the Levites' importance throughout history motivated his interpolation of *Mykyh* in Neh 12:41 (in the same manner, *Bnyhw*, who is listed together with the priests participating in moving the Ark to Jerusalem in 1 Chronicles 15, may be an intrusive Levite [*Bny* juxtaposed with *Zkryhw*]). Liver¹²⁷ cautiously suggests that *Mlly*, *Mʿy*, Nethanel, and Hanani, who are missing in LXX A and B, are an addition (presumably of the Chronicler). Basically, the list in Neh 12:33ff. may be regarded earlier than the passages in Chronicles where the Levitical singers precede the priest-trumpeters (notably, 1 Chr 15:19ff.; 16:5–6; 2 Chr 5:12, 29:25ff.; cf. Liver¹²⁸). Because *ʿzrʿl*/**ʿzyʿl* (LXX AB Οζιηλ) is juxtaposed with *Gll* descendant of Jeduthun in Neh 12:36 he is most probably identical with *ʿzyʿl*, descendant of Jeduthun. *Mlly* is possibly due to a dittography of the following *Gllly*.

6. *The Post-Nehemiah Memoir
and Sources Attributed to the Chronicler*

Neh 11:7 is presumably a post-NM addition, but it is hardly the

125. Pace Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 156–57 ad loc.

126. Cf. Friedlaender, *Genealogische Studien* 11, 29–30.

127. Liver, *Chapters in the History*, 58 n. 25.

128. *Ibid.*, 72.

Chronicler's.¹²⁹ The short genealogy in Neh 13:13 is considered part of NM (with a somewhat suspected late pro-Levitic tenor in v. 13b), whereas the more elaborate lists in Neh 11:15ff., 22 belong to post-NM. Zechariah's genealogy (seven generations) in Neh 12:35 seems to be an elaboration of Neh 13:13 to some extent. The filiation of Shemaiah (five generations) in Neh 11:15 seems to offer a link (through *B(w)ny* and Hashabiah) between the Asaphite and the Jeduthunite musicians if compared with Neh 11:22. The priority of the Nehemiah's list over that of Chronicles¹³⁰ may be corroborated by the fact that both the genealogies and the name forms in the former list are shorter and mostly non-Tetragrammatized. Besides, the Ephraimites and Manassites are secondary (the Chronicler's invention possibly inspired by Nehemiah¹³¹).

C. *Ezra in the Shadow of Nehemiah*

Ezra's story derives to a certain extent from that of Nehemiah, and in several points duplicates it. It is noteworthy that Nehemiah, but not Ezra, is mentioned by Jesus ben Sirach. However, this is hardly ample evidence that Ezra the Priest did not exist but was invented by the Chronicler (as is argued by Torrey¹³²). Ezra is *in* Nehemiah's shadow rather than *being* Nehemiah's shadow. Jesus ben Sirach did not mention Ezra for two reasons: (1) Nehemiah was the restorer of Jerusalem and its wall, whereas Ezra did not build anything;¹³³ and (2) Ezra is heavily edited by the Chronicler and has a pro-Levitic bias, while Jesus ben Sirach is a proponent of the older Priestly tradition.¹³⁴ A case in point for the dependence of the book of Ezra on NM is the letter to Artaxerxes, whose agitation may be inspired by the incitement of Sanballat against Nehemiah in the NM.¹³⁵ While Ezra is a secondary source in relationship to Nehemiah, Esther is a tertiary source: this is echoed in Haman's

129. Cf. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 323f.

130. See W. Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia samt 3. Ezra* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament 20; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949) 183–84; Mowinkel, *Studien*, 146–47.

131. Cf. my *Pre-Hellenistic Israelite Anthroponymy and Prosopography* (OLA 28; Leuven: Peeters, 1988) 46–47; idem, "On the Reliability," 237.

132. Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, passim.

133. See J. A. Emerton, "Review of Kellermann, *Nehemia*," *JTS* 23 (1972) 185.

134. See P. Höffken, "Warum schwieg Jesus Sirach über Ezra?" *ZAW* 87 (1975) 184–202; cf. B. Gosse, *L'alliance avec Lévi et l'opposition entre les lignées royales et sacerdotale à l'époque perse*, *Transeuphratène* 10 (1995) 32–33.

135. Cf. Edelman, *Origins*, 194–95, with previous literature.

accusations in this novel, which has hardly any historical value.¹³⁶ Briend concludes that the declaration of Cyrus (in Hebrew) cannot be regarded as a historical source because its perspective is prophetic with reminiscences of the exodus.¹³⁷ Fried demonstrates that the account of the temple restoration and the Cyrus declaration, which is embedded in it, conform to the typology of temple building in the ancient Near East (the names of the temple vessels are hardly Persian).¹³⁸ Like the books of Chronicles, the book of Ezra is based on other biblical sources and contains midrashic material.¹³⁹ The account of Ezra's mission is hardly authentic.¹⁴⁰ Dandamaev draws an analogy between Ezra and the Egyptian Udjahorresne: the former was sent by Artaxerxes to Judea to authorize the laws of the Torah, while the latter advised Darius I and his satrap in Egypt to put down the Egyptian laws from the time of the last Saitic king.¹⁴¹ On the whole, Ezra seems to be a figure with whom the Pharisees (but not the Hasmoneans) identified themselves.

The account of the deportees, who were brought to the cities of the Samaria province (2 Kgs 17:24ff.) from Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim by an anonymous Assyrian king (presumably the conqueror Sargon and his son Sennacherib), probably predates that of Ezra 4, where the Samaritans state that they were brought by Esarhaddon (in the introductory Hebrew narrative) and by his son *'snpr* (= Ashurbanipal) in the Aramaic document (vv. 2, 10, respectively).¹⁴² The identifiable ethnic groups brought by Ashurbanipal are *'rkwy*' (Erechites), *Bbly*' (Babylonians), and *Šwšnky*' = *'lmy*' (Susians = Elamites). Unlike the first wave of the deportees (basically from the periphery of Babylonia), these later three groups (urbanites from Babylon and Susa) still retained their identity about 200 years after their deportation. The deportees

136. See B. Shapira, *Ha-Reka' ha-histori shel "Megilat Ester"* (Jerusalem: Hrwzn, 1947), cited in Y. Avishur, "*Lrq' hHystwry šl Mgyll 'str*," *Beth Mikra* 110 (1987) 290–91; R. Zadok, "On the Historical Background of the Book of Esther," *BN* 24 (1984) 18–23.

137. Briend, "L'édit de Cyrus," 44.

138. Fried, *Priest*, 159ff.; the names of the vessels are not Persian, despite p. 167.

139. See P. Abadie, "Esdras, prêtre et scribe," *Transeuphratène* 28 (2004) 13–31.

140. Despite Fried, *Priest*, 212ff.

141. M. A. Dandamaev, "Achaemenid Imperial Policies and Provincial Governments," *Iranica* 34 (1999) 274. The following information on the later reception of Ezra–Nehemiah is from Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 55ff.

142. For Aram. *ygyr*', see Akkad. *kabtu*, "honored, important, venerable," said of the royal name of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal (*CAD* K 27a, 3c).

from Cutha might have been reckoned together with the ones from neighboring Babylon, seeing that the two temple cities have a close relationship. Elsewhere, the Chronicler does not show an anti-Samaritan attitude. This may be due to the fact that he did not belong to the priestly circles of the Jerusalem temple, who were hostile to the Samaritan elite. The biblical hapax *bʿl tʿm* denotes “bearer of report, reporter, presider over deliberations” and not “lord of the decree”¹⁴³ in view of its ultimate Akkadian source, *bēl tēmi*, which is amply documented (CAD T 97a).

Blenkinsopp rejects without adequate justification the opinion of Hölscher that the list of Judeans who married alien wives (Ezra 10:18, 20–44a) is not authentic.¹⁴⁴ The list indeed shows clear marks of disturbance (presumably due to the Chronicler’s interference).¹⁴⁵ The evidence I present¹⁴⁶ suggests that these names were intentionally interpolated into the non-Priestly sections of the list. The Chronicler, who probably belonged to the temple musicians, presumably an Asaphite, listed only one musician, *šmʿy*, probably the Jeduthunite rather than his Asaphite namesake (Neh 12:35). He replaced the musicians’ clan of *Zkwr* (extant in the Lucianic Ζακχαρι; related to Asaph) with the priestly name *ʾhyšyb*. Thus, no Asaphite is included in this long list. The gatekeepers, who belonged to several clans, are represented here only by *ʾwry*, who resembles the name of the priest *ʾwryh*, father of Meremoth. *Pthyh* was not a musician and is homonymous with a priestly clan. The Chronicler’s extensive interpolations presumably reflect the conflict between the Levites, especially the musicians, and the priests during the Hellenistic period (with potential roots in the Achaemenid period). The Chronicler tried to advance the musicians’ cause in their anti-priestly polemic by presenting the priests as proponents of mixed marriages, a practice avoided by the Asaphite musicians, according to the list that the Chronicler has finally shaped.

Nehemiah 8 belongs to the Ezra narrative with the discernible Chronicler’s redaction.¹⁴⁷ Hilkiah, Uriah, Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah,

143. Pace Edelman, *Origins*, 190.

144. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 199–200; G. Hölscher, “Levi,” in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (ed. A. F. von Pauly et al.; vol. 12; Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1925) 2190; cf. O. Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of Its Results and Problems* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 181 with literature.

145. See my “On the Reliability,” 235–36.

146. Ibid.

147. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 42, 282ff.

and Maaseiah stood to the right of Ezra and Mishael, Malchijah, Meshulam, Zichri, Hashum, and Hashabiah to his left. All of them were priests and Levites (there is little support for the view of Blenkinsopp¹⁴⁸ that they were laymen). Bani, Jeshua, Hodia, Akkub, Sherebiah, Jozabad, Kelita, Jamin, Pelaiah, Azariah = Azzur, Shecaniah, Hanani, Maaseiah, and Shabbethai acted as expositors (*mbynym*). *Zkry*, *Mšlm* are juxtaposed like *Zkryh* and *Mšlm*.¹⁴⁹ The priests *Mšlm* and *Zkry* are listed together in Neh 12:16–17 (both names are very common among postexilic priests and Levites; for the former, see, e.g., Neh 3:4, 30; 12:33). On the other hand, the Levites (*M*)*šlm* (Neh 12:25; 1 Chr 9:31) and *Zkry* (1 Chr 25:2, 15, 19 = *Zkur*, Neh 12:35) are related according to the Chronicler (for the former, see Ezra 10:2). *Ymyn* is originally a corrupted appellative according to Torrey.¹⁵⁰ The book of Chronicles is—in my opinion—early Hellenistic rather than late Achaemenid. The especially privileged status of Mareshah in the Chronicler's genealogy of Judah is the crown witness for this date. Mareshah is presented as the father of the very ancient town of Hebron by the Chronicler (1 Chr 2:52; proposed emendations are unnecessary). Such a presentation was possible only in the early Hellenistic period when Mareshah became the most important urban center of the Idumean Shephela, whereas Hebron, which also belonged to Idumea then, apparently lost its political importance (the capital of upper Idumea was not Hebron but Adoraim). Levin fails to understand this point when he states “it is difficult to understand how the Idumean or ‘Sidonite’ town of this [Persian] period could have become the ‘father’ of a leading Judahite family.”¹⁵¹ The Chronicler, who was acquainted with the inheritance lists of Joshua, was aware that Mareshah originally belonged to Judah.¹⁵² The negligible archaeological evidence from the Achaemenid period is in sharp contrast to the urban character of Mareshah and the rich finds from there datable to the early Hellenistic (Ptolemaic and Seleucid) period.¹⁵³ This accords well with the numismatic evidence.¹⁵⁴ The emergence of Maresha as a regional center

148. Ibid., 287.

149. Ibid., 165.

150. Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, 268.

151. Y. Levin, “From ‘Goshen to Gibeon’ (Joshua 10:41): The Southern Border of the Early Monarchy,” *Maarav* 10 (2003) 211.

152. There is more on the “upgrading” of Mareshah in my “On the reliability,” 244–45.

153. Cf. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 220 with n. 136.

154. See A. Kloner, “The Introduction of the Greek Language and Culture in the Third Century B.C.E. according to the Archaeological Evidence in Idu-

hardly predates the Ptolemaic period. Therefore, this may be one of the chronological anchors for dating the book of Chronicles by supplying a terminus ante quem for its composition (at least as far as the alternative genealogy of the Calebites in 1 Chr 2:42–46 is concerned). In short, the book of Chronicles does not predate the end of the Ptolemaic rule in Palestine. Moreover, as was observed by Schürer,¹⁵⁵ there is good reason for thinking that at least 1 Chronicles 24, where Jehoiarib is listed as the first ward, cannot predate the early Hasmonean period. This early Hasmonean interpolation is even more conspicuous in Neh 11:10–11, where *Yhwryb* is listed before the Zadokite < *ʿzryh* s. of *Śryh*, the ruler (*ngd*, defective for *ngyd*) of the temple, that is, the high priest. The latest material in the book of Chronicles is early Hasmonean, because the book does not postdate the middle of the second century B.C.E., when it was used by the Jewish historian Eupolemos.

maea,” in *Judah between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 B.C.E.)* (ed. O. Lipschits and L. L. Grabbe; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2007) 71–74.

155. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (4th ed., Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907; repr., Hildesheim: Olms, 1964) 2:290 n. 45. He was followed by Meyer, *Entstehung* 174; cf. Hölscher, “Levi,” 2191; U. Kellermann, “Die Listen in Nehemia 11: Eine Dokumentation aus den letzten Jahren des Reiches Juda?” *ZDPV* 82 (1966) 214; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 161; K. Koch, “Ezra and Nehemiah: Remarks on the History of the High Priesthood,” in *Shaʿarei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. M. Fishbane, E. Tov, and W. W. Fields; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 109. The counter-arguments of Liver (*Chapters in the History* 35–36) are in the tradition of the Mazar school advocating an early date for the book of Chronicles, which is totally unacceptable.

Part Two

Text, Literature, and Interpretation

Hidden Treasure: The Unpublished Doublet Catchwords in Ezra–Nehemiah

DAVID MARCUS

One of the features of the new edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ),¹ is the inclusion of both the Masorah parva (Mp) and the Masorah magna (Mm) of the Leningrad Codex (L). While preparing the fascicle of Ezra–Nehemiah (Ezra–Neh) for BHQ, I noted that some Mp material written in the margins of L had never been published. These are catchwords that are attached to many Mp doublet notes. Most Mp doublet notes are simply marked by the Hebrew letter כּ representing the numeral 2. The numeral indicates that an identical word or phrase appears somewhere else in the Hebrew Bible, but the reader is given no indication as to where. However, a special group of doublets have catchwords attached to the numeral, indicating the specific verse where the parallel appears. In effect, these catchwords serve as memory aids reminding the reader where the second form of the doublet can be found.

How Catchwords Work

Here is an example how the catchwords work. At Neh 3:33, there is an Mp note on the word נִכְעַס, “he was angry” (see fig. 1). The subject of the verb is Sanballat, the arch enemy of Nehemiah, who is characterized as furious with Nehemiah for attempting to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The Mp note reads בִּ אֵסָא, which signifies that the form נִכְעַס appears twice in the Hebrew Bible and that the second reference is in a verse containing the word אָסָא. That verse is in 2 Chr 16:10, where

1. At the time of writing, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart has published five fascicles: *General Introduction and Megilloth* (2004); *Ezra–Nehemiah* (2006); *Deuteronomy* (2007); *Proverbs* (2008); and *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (2010).

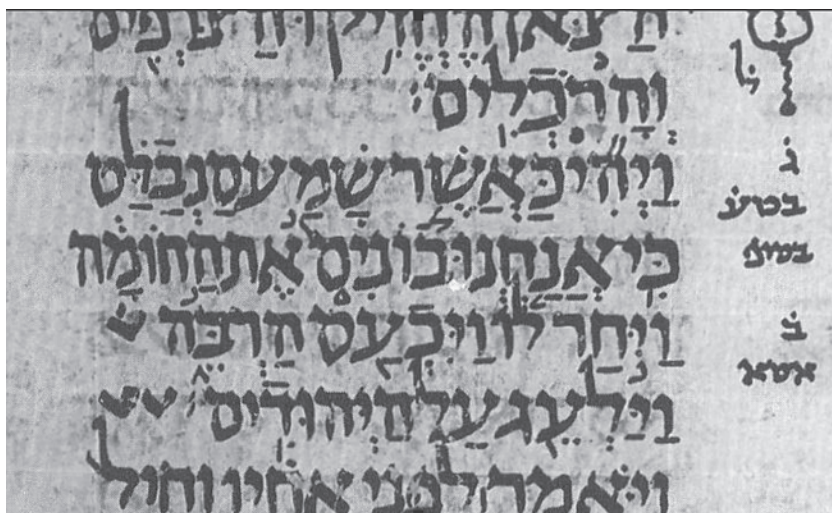


Figure 1. The catchword אסא (Neh 3:33).

the text reads **וַיִּכְעַס אָסָא**, referring to King Asa of Judah, who is likewise depicted as being angry, in his case with Hanani the seer for giving him an unfavorable prophecy. In the 2 Chronicles verse, there is also an Mp note on the word **וַיִּכְעַס**, which reads **בְּהִרְבָּה** (see fig. 2). Just like the note at Neh 3:33, this note signifies that the form **וַיִּכְעַס** appears only twice in the Hebrew Bible and that the second reference is in a verse containing the word **הִרְבָּה**. This is the verse in Nehemiah, where the text reads **וַיִּכְעַס הִרְבָּה**, “he was extremely vexed,” referring to Sanballat. These are the only two verses in the Hebrew Bible to use the the form **וַיִּכְעַס**. The catchwords thus serve as memory aids, each reminding the reader of the other’s location, one in Nehemiah and the other in Chronicles.

Analysis of the Catchwords

The catchwords that are associated with the books of Ezra–Neh and that are listed in table 1² are typical of the catchwords that appear throughout the Codex. An analysis of these catchwords shows that they exhibit the following characteristics. Most of them consist of one or two words, such as **וַאֲמַר** (§5), **מִצְמִיחַ** (§7), **עַמִּי הָאֲרָצוֹת** (§2), and **אֲשֶׁר שָׁמָּה** (§18). Some have three words, such as **וְנִסְעָה מִנֶּהֱרָא אֲהוּא** (§1) or **כִּי הָיְינוּ בְּזוּזָה** (§18).

2. Hereafter, unless specified otherwise, section numbers refer to table 1.

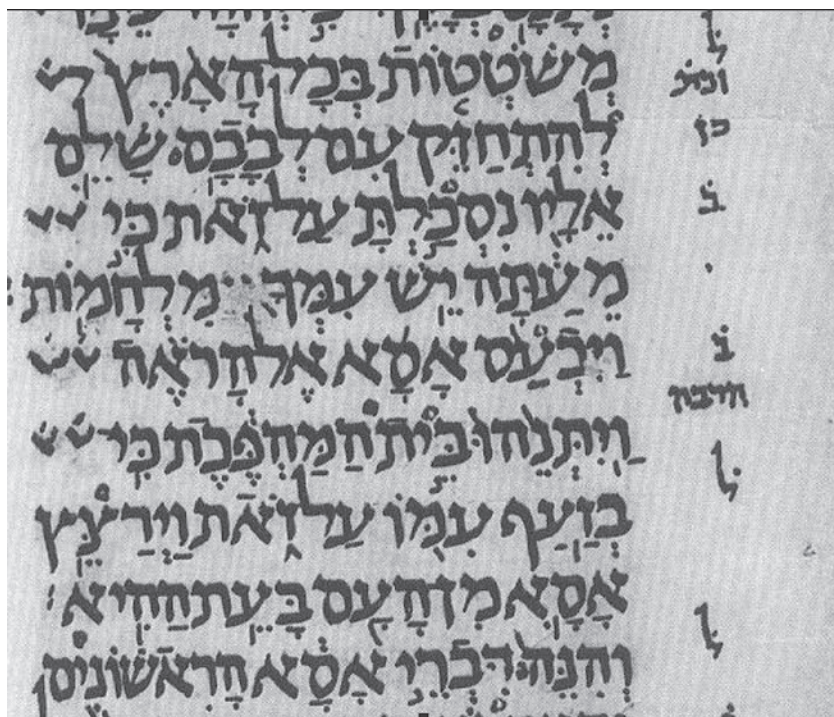


Figure 2. The catchword הרבה (2 Chr 16:10).

(§11), and there is one doublet that has four words להביא אחד מן העש (= (העשרה) (§27).

Catchwords tend to be contiguous and either follow or precede the doublet they illustrate. An example of catchwords following the doublet is at Neh 6:19 on the doublet וְדַבְּרִי (§18), referring to the parallel verse, Isa 59:21, which reads וְדַבְּרִי אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַעְתִּי. An example of catchwords preceding a doublet is at 1 Chr 29:15 on the doublet מִקֶּנֶה (§3), referring to the parallel verse Ezra 10:2, which reads וְעֵתָהּ יִשְׁ-מִקֶּנֶה. Sometimes the doublet itself is included with the catchwords, such as at Gen 15:18 (§1), where the doublet מְנַהֵר is written with the catchwords וְנִסְעָה מְנַהֵר אֵהוּא, which refer to the parallel verse Ezra 8:31.

Occasionally, a word or two is omitted between the catchwords and the doublet, as at Neh 2:14 (§7) with the doublet לְבַהֲמָה, where the text of the parallel passage, Ps 104:14, reads מִצְמִיחַ תִּצְיֵר לְבַהֲמָה. In this case, only the word מִצְמִיחַ is given as the catchword, and the word תִּצְיֵר, which appears before the doublet לְבַהֲמָה, is not written. In one case,

Table 1. Ezra–Nehemiah Doublets and Their Catchwords

No.	Verse	Doublet	Masorah	2nd Verse	Masorah
1	Ezra 8:31	מְנַחֶה	No Mp	Gen 15:18	בַּ וְנִסְעָה מְנַהֵר אֲדוּרָא
2	Ezra 9:11	בְּנִדָּת	בַּ Mp בַּ וְסִימְנָה וְאֵל Mm אֲשֶׁה . בְּנִדָּת עִם	Lev 18:19	בַּ עַמִּי הָאֲרָצוֹת
3	Ezra 10:2	מִקְוֶה	בַּ	1 Chr 29:15	בַּ וְעַתָּה יֵשׁ
4	Ezra 10:6	לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל	בַּ מֹשֶׁה וְעֹזְרָא	Exod 34:28	No Mp
5	Neh 1:5	הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא	בַּ	Dan 9:4	בַּ וְאָמַר
6	Neh 2:1	נִסָּן	בַּ הוּא חֹדֶשׁ	Esth 3:7	בַּ
7	Neh 2:14	לְבַהֲמָה	בַּ מִצְמִיחַ	Ps 104:14	No Mp בַּ מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר . Mm וְאֵין מָקוֹם לְבַהֲמָה
8	Neh 2:19	הָעֵל	בַּ בִּטֵּעַ אֲדִינִיךְ דְּמַלֵּךְ	2 Kgs 18:27	בַּ
9	Neh 3:33	וְיִכְעַס	בַּ אִסָּא	2 Chr 16:10	בַּ הֶרְבֵּה
10	Neh 3:34	שְׂרֹפּוֹת	בַּ חֹד מִלּוֹ וְחֹד חֹסֶה שְׂרֹפֶת אֵשׁ	Isa 1:7	בַּ
11	Neh 3:36	שָׁמַע אֶל־הֵינוּ	בַּ	Dan 9:17	בַּ כִּי הֵינּוּ בִּזְוָה
12	Neh 4:8	וְהַלְחֲמוּ	בַּ עַל בֵּית אֲדִינִים	2 Kgs 10:3	בַּ
13	Neh 5:5	וְאֵין לָאֵל	בַּ בְּנִין וּבְנֵתֶיךָ	Deut 28:32	בַּ
14	Neh 5:13	וְכִכָּה	בַּ תֹּאכְלוּ	Exod 12:11	בַּ יְהִיָּה נֶעוֹר
15	Neh 6:3	תִּשְׁבֹּת	בַּ הָאָרֶץ	Lev 26:34	בַּ הַמִּלְאָכָה
16	Neh 6:11	הָאִישׁ	בַּ חֹד מִלּוֹ וְחֹד בֵּית רִשְׁעִי	Mic 6:10	בַּ חֹד חֹסֶה
17	Neh 6:11	וּמִי כְמוֹנִי	בַּ יִּקְרָא	Isa 44:7	בַּ
18	Neh 6:19	וּדְבָרִי	בַּ אֲשֶׁר שְׁמִתִּי	Isa 59:21	בַּ
19	Neh 6:19	מוֹצִיאִים	בַּ וְאֵת כָּל נָשִׁיךְ	Jer 38:23	No Mp בַּ חֹד חֹסֶה וְחֹד מִלּוֹ Mm וְאֵת כָּל נָשִׁיךְ וְאֵת . וּדְבָרִי הָיוּ מוֹצִיאִים
20	Neh 7:69	כְּתָנוֹת	בַּ מִלּוֹ לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ	Gen 3:21	לֹא וְלִכְלֹ עֹזְרָא דְכוּתָּה
21	Neh 8:6	אָמֵן אָמֵן	No Mp	Num 5:22	בַּ בְּמַעַל יְדֵיהֶם
22	Neh 8:10	מִמְתָּקִים	בַּ מִּמְתָּקִים וְכָלֹ	Song 5:16	לֹא
23	Neh 8:13	וְהַשְׁכִּיל	בַּ Mp ; Mm וְסִימְנָה בְּאִמְתֶּךָ . אֵל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה	Dan 9:13	בַּ אֵל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה
24	Neh 9:28	וַיִּרְדּוּ	בַּ יִּשְׂרָאֵל	Ps 49:15	No Mp
25	Neh 9:32	יִמְעֹט	בַּ	Exod 12:4	בַּ לְפָנֶיךָ
26	Neh 10:36	וְלִהְיָא	בַּ עֲלָמִים	Dan 9:24	No Mp בַּ צִּדִּיק עֲלָמִים . Mm אֵת בְּכוֹרֵי
27	Neh 11:1	הָעֲשֵׂנָה	בַּ	Gen 18:32	בַּ לְהִבְיָא אֶחָד מִן הָעֵשׂ
28	Neh 13:9	וְהַלְבוּכָה	בַּ וּמַהֵם מִמְּנִים	1 Chr 9:29	בַּ

the catchword refers not to a specific form in the parallel verse, but to a major character prominent in that verse. At Ezra 10:6, the catchwords given for the lemma **לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל**, which appears in Exod 34:28, are **מֹשֶׁה** ו**עֶזְרָא**, “Moses and Ezra,” who are the central characters involved in these two verses.

Relation of Catchwords to Masorah Magna Notes

Just as with Mp notes in general, doublets may be the subject of more extensive Mm notes, which are written in the upper or lower margins of the manuscript. What is noteworthy about the Mm notes and the catchword doublets is that they do not appear together. A doublet that has catchwords in an Mp note will not have an Mm note on the same doublet. Where an Mm note appears, it is always on the doublet without the catchwords. For example, the Mm note with the doublet **בְּנִדָּת** (§2) is at the Ezra 9:11 reference, but the catchwords are at the parallel, Lev 18:19. The Mm note with the doublet **וְלִהְיָא** (§26) is at Dan 9:24, but the catchwords are at the parallel, Neh 10:36.

Very frequently, the wording of the catchwords in the Mp note tends to be similar to the wording of the catchwords in the Mm note, though the Mm note is often expanded. For example, the catchword **מִצְמִיחַ** in the Mp note at Neh 2:14 on the doublet **לְבַהֲמָה** (§7) is also part of the catchwords (**מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר**) in the Mm note, which appears at the parallel verse, Ps 104:14. Or the catchwords **וְאֵת כָּל נָשִׁיךְ** in the Mp note at Neh 6:19 on the doublet **מוֹצִיאִים** (§19) are part of the catchwords found in the Mm note, which appears at the parallel verse, Jer 38:23. Similarly, the catchwords **אֵל דְּבַרִּי הַתּוֹרָה** in the Mp note to **וְלִהְשָׁכִיל** (§23) at Dan 9:13 are exactly the same as the catchwords found in the Mm note at the parallel, Neh 8:13.

Catchwords in Other Manuscripts

It should be pointed out that, just as L marks some doublets but not others and has catchwords for some doublets but not others, so other manuscripts have their own system of recording doublets and catchwords. Thus, doublets and catchwords that are marked in other manuscripts may not be marked in L. For example, in chapter three of Ezra, Sassoon 1053 (S¹) marks the forms **לְבוֹאִם** (v. 8), **וְכָל-הַבָּאִים, מִהַשְׁבִּי** (v. 8), **בְּמַצְלֵתִים** (v. 10), **הָרִיעוּ** (v. 11), **מִכִּירִים** (v. 13), and **וְהַקּוֹל נִשְׁמַע** (v. 13) as doublets and provides them with catchwords. But L only designates three of them, **וְכָל-הַבָּאִים**, **הָרִיעוּ**, and **וְהַקּוֹל נִשְׁמַע**, as doublets, and none of the doublet forms from S¹ has catchwords in L. On the other hand, L

marks the forms הָעֵל (Neh 2:19, §8), וְהַלְחָמוֹ (Neh 4:8, §12), וְאֵין לְאֵל (Neh 5:5, §13), מוֹצִיאִים (Neh 6:19, §19), מִמֶּתְקִים (Neh 8:10, §22), וַיִּרְדּוּ (Neh 9:28, §24), and וְהַלְבוֹנָה (Neh 13:9, §28) as doublets with catchwords, but S¹ marks them only as doublets without catchwords.

Previous Publication of These Catchwords

There are a few more than 500 catchwords attached to doublets in L, and although they are written in the margins of L, until my paper in 2007,³ they were never previously published. Even in the third edition of *Biblia Hebraica* (*BHK*) which claimed to offer a diplomatic edition of the Mp notes, these catchwords were included only in isolated instances.⁴ In *BHS*, although the Mp was presented in a revised and enlarged edition by Gérard E. Weil, these catchwords surprisingly were not printed at all.⁵ Instead, where the manuscript contains catchwords, *BHS* provides the biblical reference as to where these catchwords appear.⁶ But the *BHS* system has many limitations.

In the first place, it is inconsistent. There are doublets that have catchwords for which no references are cited. For example, there is no reference on the lemma וְדִבְרֵי (§18), which appears at Isa 59:21 and Neh 6:19, and has catchwords at Neh 6:19, nor is there a reference on the lemma כְּתוּבוֹת (§20), which appears at Gen 3:21 and Neh 7:69 and has catchwords at Neh 7:69. On the other hand, there are references cited for doublets that have no catchwords. For example, at Neh 9:4 a biblical reference is given to 1 Sam 28:12 for the phrase וַיִּזְעַקוּ בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל, leading the reader to assume that there is a catchword or catchwords at one of the references. But there are no catchwords at either reference.

Second, there is no way the reader can tell on which doublet the catchwords can be found, or whether the catchwords appear with both doublets. For example, biblical references are given at both Gen 15:18 and Ezra 8:31 for the doublet מִנְהַר (§1), but the catchwords are only at the Genesis reference.

3. David Marcus, "The Masora Parva Catchwords in the Leningrad Codex" in *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 12 (2007) n.p. [accessed November 18, 2010]. Online: <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol12/Marcus2007.pdf>.

4. Such as in the book of Isaiah (at 1:3, 25:5, and so on).

5. It is surprising because Weil's goal was to provide a complete Masorah. He intended to provide "a complete, revised, integrated, and intelligible apparatus" (prolegomena to *BHS*, xv).

6. Weil, prolegomena to *BHS*, xvii.

Third, whenever an Mm note appears with one of these doublets, a reference is given not to a biblical verse but to Weil's companion *Massorah Gedolah* volume,⁷ so in these cases there is no way one can know that catchwords also exist in the parallel doublet. For example, only the Weil reference (§3924), but not any biblical reference, is given with the doublet בְּנִדָּת (§2) at both Ezra 9:11 and Lev 18:19, despite the fact that the doublet has Mp catchwords at Lev 18:19. Similarly, with the doublet לְבִהְמָה (§7), only the Weil reference §3371 is given at Neh 2:14 and Ps 104:14, yet there the doublet has catchwords at Neh 2:14.⁸

Purpose of the Catchwords

Nearly all the doublets containing catchwords can be shown to conform to the regular Masoretic concern for preserving the text and for highlighting significant forms or phrases.

Preserving the Text

In the Ezra–Neh material, one can point to catchword doublets protecting plene or defective writing, specific vocalization of words, accents, presence or absence of the definite article, the *waw* conjunction, or a preposition. Here are examples of each of these categories.

Plene or defective writing. The doublet מוֹצִיאִים (§19) is marked to show that the form in Neh 6:19 is written plene, whereas the parallel form in Jer 38:23 is written defectively. By contrast, the doublet כְּתָנוֹת (§20) is marked to show that both forms of כְּתָנוֹת at Gen 3:21 and at Neh 7:69 are written plene.

Vocalization. The doublet מְקִיָּה (§3), with a *segol* under the ך, is marked to distinguish it from the more numerous forms of מְקִיָּה, written with a *tsere*.

Accents. The doublet הָעֵל (§8) is marked to indicate that there is a second appearance of this form, accented on the ultimate rather than on the penultimate syllable, which is the norm.

7. Gérard E. Weil, *Massorah Gedolah* (2nd ed.; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001).

8. Other examples of this type in our corpus are: with הָעֵל (§8), which has a catchword at Neh 2:10, but only the Weil number §2346 is given at Neh 2:19 and 2 Kgs 18:27; with מוֹצִיאִים (§18), which has catchwords at Neh 6:19, but only the Weil number §2681 is given at Neh 6:19 and Jer 38:23; with וְלִהְשִׁיבִיל (§22), which has catchwords at Dan 9:13, but only the Weil reference §3971 is given at Neh 8:13 and Dan 9:13; on וְלִהְבִּיא (§25), which has catchwords at Neh 10:36, but only the Weil reference §3866 is given at Neh 10:36 and Dan 9:24.

Definite article. The doublet הַעֲשֶׂהָ (§27) is marked to distinguish it from the overwhelmingly more numerous forms of עֲשֶׂהָ (143 times) without the definite article.

Preposition. The doublet מִנְהָ (§1) is marked to distinguish it from the common construct form נְהָ, without the preposition מִן.

Waw conjunction. The doublet וְכָכָה (§14), with the *waw* conjunction, is marked to distinguish it from the more numerous forms of כָּכָה without the *waw* conjunction. On the other hand, the doublet אָמֵן | אָמֵן (§21), without the *waw* conjunction, is marked to distinguish it from the similar phrase אָמֵן | וְאָמֵן with the *waw* conjunction.

By designating these forms as doublets, the Masoretes attempted to preserve the text and protect it from change or from alternate readings. Here are examples of alternate readings proposed by modern scholars for two of the doublets in the chart. In Gen 15:18, the covenantal promise of land is made to Abraham, that his descendants will have a future land whose borders will range “from the river of Egypt (מִנְהָר מִצְרַיִם)⁹ to the great river, the river Euphrates.” Since the usual designation of the dividing line between Egypt and Palestine is נַחַל מִצְרַיִם,¹⁰ “the brook of Egypt,” which probably denotes Wadi el-ʿArish, it has been proposed to emend מִנְהָר in Gen 15:18 to מִנַּחַל.¹¹ By placing a Masoretic note here on מִנְהָר (§1) and providing catchwords equating the form מִנְהָר with the place from which Ezra departed on his journey to Jerusalem in Ezra 8:31 (ונסעה מנהר אהוא “we set out [for Jerusalem] from the Ahava river”), the Masoretes protect the text in Genesis from alteration.

Another example of this type is with the doublet הָעֵל (§8), appearing at 2 Kgs 18:27 and Neh 2:19. The context of 2 Kgs 18:27 records the reply of the Rabshakeh to Hezekiah’s emissaries who had asked him to speak in Aramaic, rather than in Judean, so that the people should not hear him. The Rabshakeh rebukes the emissaries saying: “was it (only) to your master (Hezekiah) (הָעֵל אֶדְנִיךָ) and to you (his emissaries) (וְאַלְיָךְ) that my master (Sennacherib) sent me to speak those words? (Rather) it was precisely to the men who are sitting on the wall (that I was sent).” There are two prepositions in this sentence following the verb ‘to send’, the first one is an unexpected one, עַל, and the second an expected אֶל.

9. The phrase “the river of Egypt” (נְהָר מִצְרַיִם) does not denote the Nile, which is elsewhere termed יְאֹר יִצְרָאֵל.

10. Num 34:5, Josh 15:4, etc.

11. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (trans. John H. Marks; rev. ed.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 189; *BHK*; and *BHS*. Note the same formulation as the proposed emendation in 2 Kgs 24:7, מִנַּחַל מִצְרַיִם עַד-נְהָר-פָּרָת.

Because the first preposition *על* is awkward, some commentators¹² have suggested changing *העל* to *האל*, on the basis not only of the context and the following *ואליך*, but also because of the identical parallel of this section in Isa 36:12, which has two *אל* prepositions (*האל אדניך ואליך*). The Masoretic note on *העל* (§8) at Neh 2:19 with its catchwords is thus a caution against emending the parallel doublet form *העל* at 2 Kgs 18:27.

Highlighting Significant Forms

Apart from protecting the text, the next major function of Masoretic doublets is to highlight significant words or phrases. For example, in the Ezra–Neh material the phrases *הגדול והנורא* (§5) at Neh 1:5 and *שמע אלהינו* (§11) at Neh 3:36 are seemingly marked because they direct our attention to parallel prayer contexts in the book of Daniel. Only Nehemiah and Daniel use these phrases. Nehemiah includes them in his opening prayer upon receiving news from his kinsmen about the situation in Jerusalem (1:5) and in one of his prayers for retribution against his enemies (3:36). Daniel uses both phrases in his great prayer of supplication in chapter nine (vv. 4 & 17).

Another notable doublet marked in Ezra–Neh is that of *ניסן* (§6). By marking this word as a doublet and attaching catchwords to it at Neh 2:1 (*הוא חודש*), the Masorah points out that there are only two references to the month name Nisan, one in Nehemiah and one in Esther (3:7). Elsewhere, of course, the first month is designated either by the Canaanite month name *אביב*¹³ or by the more common phrase *בחדש הראשון*, “in the first month.”¹⁴

Exegetical Use of Catchwords

The original purpose of these catchwords eludes us. We do not know why specific doublets were selected to bear catchwords and what usage the Masoretes made of these catchwords. Israel Yeivin has suggested that they may have originated for pedagogical reasons for “oral learning and teaching.”¹⁵ Indeed, the appearance of so many of these catchwords in the Torah section, three-fifths of the total (303 of 504), supports this suggestion. Nevertheless, whatever the original usage, it

12. John Gray, *I and II Kings* (OTL; rev ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 676; *BHK*; and *BHS*.

13. Exod 13:4, 23:15, etc.

14. Exod 40:17, Lev 23:5, etc.

15. Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (trans. E. J. Revell; Masoretic Studies 5. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980) 75.

seems that a modern reader, interested in intertextual exegesis,¹⁶ would have good reason to make use of these catchwords. Because when two forms of a lemma appear in only two texts, it is possible that the text in which one form appears may elucidate the second text.

The Masoretic notes have often been used for grammatical purposes,¹⁷ but very few scholars have utilized them to compare biblical passages exegetically.¹⁸ The only medieval Jewish commentator who regularly used the Masoretic notes in this fashion was Jacob ben Asher (1269–1343; known as Baal Turim). Ben Asher did not cite the catchwords, but he often included in his commentary instances of where the Masorah noted a doublet and then compared the parallel verses for homoleptic purposes.¹⁹ An example of his method may be seen from his comment on the doublet בְּנִדָּת (§2) in his commentary to Lev 18:19.²⁰

The Masoretic note, 'ב, on the term בְּנִדָּת means that it appears twice in the Tanach: (1) here and (2) in the book of Ezra, בְּנִדָּת עַמִּי הָאֲרָצוֹת, *because of the separation of the peoples of the land* (Ezra 9:11[12]).

16. The most common understanding of “intertextuality” is as “allusions to, echoes and quotations of, other texts” (Jean Louis Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us: Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives* [Susidia Biblica; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1990] 81). But this type of intertextuality is usually understood to be chronological, the assumption being that earlier texts are echoed in later texts. In “intertextual exegesis” the reader interacts with both texts without regard for their chronological primacy. In this view of intertextuality, “the reader is also a text and that reading is in essence an encounter between texts. The reader is a bundle of hermeneutics, as it were, engaging a text that is itself a bundle of hermeneutics” (James A. Sanders, “Intertextuality and Dialogue,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 29 [1999] 38).

17. See most recently Elvira Martín Contreras and Guadalupe Seijas de los Ríos-Zarzosa, *Masora: La transmisión de la tradición de la Biblia Hebrea* (Estella Navarra: Verbo Divino, 2010) 201–11.

18. Such as James A. Sanders, “Text and Canon: Concepts and Method,” in *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 138; also published in *JBL* 98 (1979) 5–29; Emilia Fernández Tejero, “Masora y Exégesis” in *Simposio bíblico español (Salamanca, 1982)* (ed. N. Frenandez Marcos et al.; Madrid, Universidad complutense, 1984) 183–91; and Elvira Martín Contreras, “Masoretic and Rabbinic Lights on the Word הָבִי, Ruth 3:15: יֵהָב or יֵבֹא” *VT* 59 (2009) 257–65.

19. Ben Asher’s commentary on the Torah has recently been published with an English translation and notations by Avie Gold, *Baal Haturim Chumash* (5 vols; New York: Mesorah, 1999–2004).

20. *Ibid.*, 1187.

For if a man observes the prohibition against approaching a woman in her state of separation, it is written regarding him, *He is a righteous man, he shall surely live* (Ezekiel 18:9). However, if he does approach her in the time of her unclean separation, he will be condemned to *the separation of the peoples of the land*.

Some Exegetical Suggestions

It is my belief that many of these catchword doublets may be useful in intertextual exegesis. To illustrate the possibilities for their exegetical use, I offer suggestions on three of the catchwords in the Ezra–Neh material listed in table 1.

The first exegetical suggestion is with the doublet לָחֶם לֹא אָכַל (§4) at Ezra 10:6. The catchwords מִשֶּׁה וְעִזְרָא attached to the Mp note there connect that passage with Exod 34:28, which describes Moses on Mount Sinai. In Ezra 10:6, Ezra, having being informed of the toleration of intermarriage by the Golah community, spends the night praying, confessing, and fasting: “he ate no bread and drank no water” (לָחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמִיָּם לֹא שָׁתָה). For his part, Moses on Mount Sinai, prior to receiving the Ten Commandments, also fasted, albeit for 40 days and 40 nights. Nevertheless, he too “ate no bread and drank no water” (לָחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמִיָּם לֹא שָׁתָה). By connecting the two texts, the Masoretes seem to compare Ezra to Moses. Just as Moses “ate no bread and drank no water,” Ezra does likewise. This Masoretic interconnection suggests to the reader that Ezra might be considered a second Moses, as rabbinic tradition indeed perceived him.²¹

The second exegetical suggestion is for the doublet וְאֵין לָאֵל (§13) at Neh 5:5. Here, the catchwords בְּנֵיךָ וּבָנֹתֶיךָ, “your sons and your daughters” connect the Nehemiah text to Deut 28:32. The context of the Nehemiah passage is the complaint of the people that they are completely impoverished. Their fields are pawned, their children are pledged to slavery, and they are powerless (וְאֵין לָאֵל) to do anything. The context of the parallel Deuteronomy passage where the phrase וְאֵין לָאֵל appears is the curses that will come on the nation for breach of the covenant. The pertinent curse in v. 32 states that breach of the covenant will result in their children being delivered to another people and that the Israelites will be helpless (וְאֵין לָאֵל) to do anything about it. By referencing the curse at Deut 28:32 with the catchwords בְּנֵיךָ וּבָנֹתֶיךָ, the Masoretic note

21. “If Moses had not anticipated him, Ezra would have received the Torah” (*t. Sanh.* 4:7); see “Ezra,” *EncJud* 6:1106, and Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 57–59.

at Neh 5:5 leads the reader to consider the possibility that in Nehemiah's time the children have been taken away and the people reduced to helplessness (וְאֵין לָאֵל) as a consequence of their breach of the covenant.

The third exegetical suggestion comes from the catchwords attached to the doublet הָעִשְׂרֵה (§27) at Gen 18:22. The catchwords לְהַבִּיאַ אֶחָד מֵן הָעִשְׂרֵה connect the Genesis passage with Neh 11:1, which reads: "the rest of the people cast lots for one out of ten to come and settle in the holy city of Jerusalem, and the other nine-tenths to stay in the towns." The context of Genesis 18 is Abraham's plea that God should not destroy Sodom if ten righteous people are in it. The Masoretes connect this passage with Nehemiah's plan to bring one out of ten of the population of Judah to settle in Jerusalem. By coupling the two texts containing the number 10, the Masoretes may be suggesting that the Judeans of Nehemiah's time were akin to the ten righteous people of patriarchal times.

These are just three of many other possible exegetical possibilities for these doublet catchwords. They offer literary interconnections between passages from a source that, up till now, has been almost completely neglected. It is hoped that, by making the biblical field aware of these Masoretic doublet catchwords, biblical scholars will take note in their future research of this rich, previously hidden source of intertextual connections.

***Where Did the Judahites,
Benjaminites, and Levites Settle?
Revisiting the Text of
Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX***

DEIRDRE N. FULTON

Researchers in the field of biblical studies have long been interested in lists and how they play a part in historical narratives. Nehemiah 11–12 furnishes several lists, including the people who settled in Jerusalem, a catalog of settlements around the region of Judah, lists of temple personnel in Jerusalem, and registers of people connected to the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem. In the midst of these catalogs, the list of postmonarchic settlements in Nehemiah 11 has been of particular interest in both historical and interpretive studies. The list of settlers and their locations of settlement in Neh 11:25–36 are often examined in light of similar settlement lists of returnees during the Persian Period in Ezra 2 and its parallel list in Nehemiah 7, as well as a list of wall builders in Nehemiah 3.¹ In the case of the list of returnees found in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 as well as the list of the wall builders in Nehemiah 3, scholars have noticed that these lists contain differences in the area of settlement of Judah compared with what is found in Neh 11:25–36.²

Author's note: This essay was first presented at the SBL annual meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in November 2005. This study is part of my larger dissertation project, entitled *Mapping Early Jewish Traditions: The Case of MT and LXX Nehemiah 11–12* (Pennsylvania State University, 2011). I would like to thank Professor Isaac Kalimi for including my essay in this volume. I would also like to thank Professor Gary Knoppers for reading drafts of this work and providing me with helpful feedback.

1. For a discussion of these similarities, see for example O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005); and D. Edelman, *The Origins of the "Second" Temple* (London: Equinox, 2005).

2. Several scholars have examined these lists, including M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966) 13–33; E. Stern, *Material Culture of the*

The discrepancies in these three lists make it difficult to establish a coherent picture of where the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites settled in the Persian period.

In reconstructing the territory of Judah, few scholars have focused on the differences in length and number of settlements in the MT (Masoretic Text) and LXX (Septuagint) texts of Neh 11:25–36 (2 Esdras 21:25–36).³ The MT of Neh 11:25–36 is the longer catalog, listing 32 different towns and one valley in the regions of Judah and Benjamin where the people settled, while the LXX list is much shorter, with six different towns listed in Judah and Benjamin.⁴ The discrepancy in the number of settlements has literary and historical implications as well as geographical implications concerning where people were allowed to settle. Interestingly, Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX reveal several differ-

Land of the Bible in the Persian Period 538–332 BCE (Warminster: Aries & Phillips, 1982) 245–49; Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible* (trans. A. Rainey; 2nd ed.; London: Burns & Oates, 1979) 411–19; H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985); J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 231–29; C. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 75–113; Lipschits, “Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” *JBL* 26 (2002) 423–40; idem, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 154–74; Edelman, *Origins*, 226–33. I. Finkelstein has reexamined the settlement of Yehud presented in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 and the list of wall builders in Nehemiah 3 in light of the archaeological data dating from the Persian and Hellenistic periods. See “Archaeology and the List of Returnees in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah” *PEQ* 140 (2008) 7–16 and “The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods” *RB* 117 (2010) 39–54. Z. Zevit also offers an interpretation of the Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 material in light of the archaeological evidence, avidly disagreeing with Finkelstein’s position in his work “Is There an Archaeological Case for Phantom Settlements in the Persian Period?” *PEQ* 141 (2009) 124–37.

3. Scholars who have observed the differences between the MT and the LXX include A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: Beck, 1953) 2:289–305; J. Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (AB 14; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965); E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997) 257; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 344; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 330; G. Knoppers, “Sources, Revisions, and Editions: The Lists of Jerusalem’s Residents in MT and LXX Nehemiah 11 and I Chronicles 9,” *Textus* 20 (2000) 141–68; and R. Klein, *I Chronicles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

4. This total does not include encampments. See pp. 202–204 and 206–207 below for a discussion of the different types of settlements mentioned in the MT and LXX.

ences in form and content, particularly concerning the places where the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites settled. The MT contains a longer list than the LXX, which suggests additions to the MT, following a trend in textual divergences that begins in Neh 11:3 and continues through chap. 12. Nehemiah 11 and 12 are significantly shorter in the LXX than the MT, a difference that is all the more striking because the MT and LXX largely correspond in form and content in chaps. 1–10.⁵ Given that scholars have cited these lists for reconstructing the history of postexilic Judah, the little-noticed discrepancies have important implications for grappling with the history of Judah.

In order to evaluate the list of Neh 11:25–36, it is necessary to explore its overlap with similar lists, such as Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 and Nehemiah 3, as well as earlier settlement lists, particularly the settlement list of the tribe of Judah in Joshua 15 and Benjamin in Joshua 18. Also, it is important to examine the two different forms of Neh 11:25–36 in order to evaluate the nature of settlement in postexilic Judah. In this study, I begin with a detailed examination of the LXX and MT similarities and then turn to their differences in material and form. With this in mind, the study will consider how the MT and LXX differences affect the perceived size and scope of Israel during the Persian Period particularly in light of Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 and Nehemiah 3, which are particularly concerned with the settlement of the areas in the traditional territory of Benjamin and northern Judah. Finally, I examine whether the earlier settlement lists of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, found in Joshua 15 and 18, had any significant impact on the construction of the postexilic lists found in Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX. A detailed comparison of the form, function, and content of Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX reveals that the shorter version, preserved in the LXX, is a select

5. With the exception of the text-critical divergences between MT Neh 3:33–4:17 and 2 Esdras 14:1–15:23. The events relayed in the MT and LXX are connected to the wall-building activities and Sanballat's attempts to halt construction. For a discussion of specific translation patterns in MT and LXX texts of Nehemiah and 2 Esdras, see R. Wooden, "Interlinearity in 2 Esdras" in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. W. Kraus and R. G. Wooden; SBLSCS 53; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 119–44. For differences between Neh 4:7–24 MT and LXX, see Wooden, "The *φορολόγιος* of 2 Esdras" in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 248–57. For other examples of important discrepancies in length between the MT and LXX, see Alt, *Kleine Schriften*, 289–305; Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Tov, *Text-Critical Use*, 243–52.

register of settlements in which certain Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites settled, whereas the longer (and later) register, preserved in the MT, is much more comprehensive in nature. While both are settlement lists, the MT and LXX appear to have different goals in the presentation of the material. Thus, both make specific settlement claims, but Neh 11:25–36 MT is by far the more ambitious of the two.

Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX Similarities

The textual similarities between Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX reveal that there are a series of parallels found in both the sequence and content of material.⁶ For example, there is an overlap in the list of settlements throughout central Judah and its surrounding regions. The overlap in material is as follows.

1. Neh 11:25a, “And to the villages with their fields: Some of the sons of Judah dwelt in Kiriath-Arba.”⁷

MT: ואל⁸ החצרים בשדתם מבני יהודה ישבו בקרית הארבע

LXX: καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἐπαύλεις ἐν ἀγρῷ αὐτῶν καὶ ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰουδα ἐκαθίσταν
ἐν Καριαθαρβοκ

2. Neh 11:26, “and in Jeshua.”

6. See Appendix 1, p. 222, for the texts of Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX. I am using the Greek texts of both A. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. S. Thackeray (*The Old Testament in Greek according to the Codex Vaticanus* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935]) and R. Hanhart (*Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum graecum*, vol. 8/2: *Esdrae Liber II* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993]). I will note any variation between the different critical editions.

The settlement list in MT Neh 11:25–36 is also referred to as the list of the חצרים by several scholars, including Lipschits. See Lipschits, “Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” 423–40.

7. The MT reads בקרית הארבע, which literally states “in Kiriath the (ה) Arba” or “in the cities of the four.”

8. Many scholars emend the Kethiv reading ואל (“and to”) to ואלה (“and these”). Lipschits (“Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” 436) observes that ואל never appears in the beginning or ending of lists, but ואלה appears as the heading of 215 lists in the Bible, many of them found in Genesis (49 times), Chronicles (46 times), and Numbers (41 times). Based on the LXX, it is clear that this possible textual corruption happened early. The LXX reads, “καὶ πρὸς” which is a translation of ואל. If it were ואלה, then the Greek would commonly read, καὶ οὗτος (“and these”). Thus, the final ה was skipped because of the prefixed ה in the following word. For specific examples of the use of ואלה as a heading, see Gen 2:4; 6:9; 10:1; Lev 23:4; 37:2, 37; Num 1:16, 44; 1 Chr 1:29; 2:50; 3:1; 4:3; 5:14.

MT: ובישוע

LXX: καὶ ἐν Ἰησοῦ

3. Neh 11:27, “and in Beersheba”

MT: ובבאר שבע

LXX: καὶ ἐν βεηρσαβε

4. Neh 11:30, “and their villages, Lachish and its fields. They encamped in Beersheba.”

MT: וחצריהם לכיש ושדתיה ויחנו מבאר שבע

LXX: καὶ ἐπαύλεις αὐτῶν Λαχίς καὶ ἀγροὶ αὐτῆς. καὶ παρανεβάλοσαν ἐν βεηρσαβε⁹

5. Neh 11:31, “And the sons of Benjamin, from Geba, Michmash.”

MT: ובני בנימן מגבע מכמש

LXX: καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Βενιαμὶν ἀπὸ Γαβα Μαχμας

6. Neh 11:36, “And of the Levites, divisions of Judah to Benjamin.”¹⁰

MT: ומן-הלויים מחלקות יהודה לבנימין

LXX: καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν Λευιτῶν μερίδες Ἰουδα τῷ Βενιαμιν

The lists preserved in the MT and LXX follow the same general pattern, moving from the settlement of some of the Judahites, then Benjaminites, and finally a reference to the Levites living in certain areas of Judah and Benjamin. From a text-critical perspective, the lists are book-ended with similar material in the MT and LXX, beginning in v. 25a and ending in v. 36. The LXX material that overlaps with the MT provides a coherent settlement list and, as we shall see, a more cursory list than Neh 11:25–36 MT.

Although the list preserved in Neh 11:25–36 LXX is much shorter, both the MT and LXX organize the overlapping settlements in the same order. The LXX can be divided by tribal designation, beginning with the area of Judah and ending with Benjamin. An alternative way to examine the list is by region. The LXX mentions settlements in the Hill Country (Kiriath-Arba), the northern Negev (Jeshua, Beersheba), the Shephelah

9. There is one small text-critical difference between the Greek and Hebrew. The Hebrew states “from Beersheba” (מבאר שבע), whereas the Greek states “in Beersheba” (ἐν βεηρσαβε). See p. 203 for a discussion of this difference.

10. The exact meaning of this passage is unclear, because there is no verb present. Blenkinsopp argues that it could indicate that the Levites were settled not only in the territory of Judah but also Benjamin and thus, a reference to a “division,” (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 332).

(Lachish), and the Highlands (Geba, Michmash).¹¹ Neh 11:25–36 LXX moves from Kiriath-Arba (preserving the archaic name of Hebron) in the hill country, then south to Jeshua and Beersheba in the northern Negev.¹² The only site mentioned in the Shephelah is Lachish. After referring to the encampments at Beersheba, the list moves to the settlements of the Benjaminites. There are two cities in which the Benjaminites are said to have settled, Geba and Michmash. The LXX material covers a sizeable area, moving from north to south and back up north, but with little depth. Rather, the list highlights one or, in the case of Benjamin, two places of settlement in each region.

Furthermore, LXX Neh 11:25–36 also provides certain internal designations regarding different types of settlement. The LXX distinguishes four different kinds of settlement, including towns, towns with associated villages (ἐπαύλεις), a town with fields (ἀγρός, Heb. **דש**), and encampments (παρεμβάλλω, Heb. **הנה**). The term ἐπαύλεις, which appears to correspond to **חצר**, has many definitions, including, a corral, a temporary dwelling of different types, farmstead, or village.¹³ Within the second designation—that is, towns connected to outlying villages—after listing Kiriath-Arba, Jeshua, and Beersheba (the first three settlements on the list), the LXX also mentions “their villages” (ἐπαύλεις αὐτῶν), seemingly referring to all of the previously mentioned places. In the instance of fields connected to settlements, like the MT, the LXX only mentions Lachish as having fields associated with the town (Λαχίς καὶ ἀγροὶ αὐτῆς).

A fourth designation for settlement is found in LXX Neh 11:30 in connection to the second reference to Beersheba, where the Judahites “set up camp” (παρεμβάλλω). The term παρεμβάλλω corresponds to the Hebrew verb **הנה**, which may mean either a temporary dwelling or mili-

11. There is no corresponding material to names in the northwestern edge of the Shephelah (the Lod and Ono region).

12. The location of Jeshua is unknown, but is often placed east-northeast of Beersheba. See A. Rainey and R. S. Notley, *The Sacred Bridge* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006) 296; Edelman, *Origins*, 227.

13. The term ἐπαύλεις (“villages”) appears several times in the Bible, most notably in Gen 25:16, which refers to the towns of the sons of Ishmael with “its villages and their camps” (**בְּחִצְרֵיהֶם וּבְשִׁירָתָם**; σκηναὶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν ταῖς επαύλεσιν αὐτῶν). Other examples include Lev 25:31, which refers to villages, and Num 32:16, which uses the term to refer to sheepfolds. The term ἐπαύλεις is from ἡ αὔλις, meaning “tent,” or a nomadic dwelling. In Polybius, this term regularly refers to a military camp (c.f. 4.4.1). Similarly, ἡ αὔλις can also mean a courtyard, surrounded by the house and other buildings. See Homer (*Od.* 4.74; *Il.* 4.433, 6.274) and Herodotus (3.77), for further examples.

tary camp. This term appears to indicate that these were not permanent settlements but are places of “pitching tents” and thus are moveable.

The settlements in Benjamin are very brief, mentioning the people of Benjamin in the towns of Geba and Michmash. This verse, however, is problematic for several reasons.¹⁴ The verse states, καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ καὶ Βενιαμὴν ἀπὸ Γαβα Μαχαμας (ורבני בנימן מגבע מכמש), “And the sons of Benjamin from Geba, Michmash.” The problem that some interpreters have is that the *mem* prefix on Geba seems out of place in the MT context because it appears to indicate that they settled “from Geba, Michmash.” This is an atypical phrase, and thus, many scholars would emend “from Geba” to “in Geba.”¹⁵ It is also problematic because in the settlement list in Neh 11:25–36 MT, there are towns north of Geba and Michmash. In Neh 11:25–36 LXX, however, Geba and Michmash are the northernmost towns. The LXX states, “from Geba, Michmash” (ἀπὸ Γαβα Μαχαμας) and thus seems to have the exact same phrase as is preserved in the MT list.

Another issue concerning the settlement of Benjamin is that it is not immediately clear whether they settled or encamped at Geba or Micmash because there is no verb indicating settlement type (καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Βενιαμὴν ἀπὸ Γαβα Μαχαμας). Neh 11:31 LXX may be dependent on v. 25a (καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Βενιαμὴν ἀπὸ Γαβα Μαχαμας), as is the case in the MT, or it may be referring to the previous verse (v. 30), which states, “They encamped in Beersheba” (καὶ παρενεβάλοσαν ἐν Βεηρσαβεε). In the instance of the LXX, it would appear that the Benjaminites are envisioned as settling in the towns of Geba and Michmash, rather than encamping. Thus, the material corresponding to v. 31 is dependent on the material corresponding to v. 25b for context. The LXX settlement list concludes

14. See Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 342; and Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 328.

15. W. Rudolph, following the Syriac reading (מבני), argues that in accordance with 11:25, a *mem* dropped out of מבני, and was mistakenly added to Geba (i.e., מגבע) (*Ezra und Nehemia samt 3. Ezra* [Handbuch zum Alten Testament 20; Tübingen: Mohr, 1949] 188). Several scholars, following Rudolph’s suggestion, emend the text to read מבני, “in Geba,” instead of מגבע, “from Geba.” These emendations makes sense in light of the use of מבני in v. 25. It is noteworthy that the LXX preserves “from Geba” (ἀπὸ Γαβα) instead of “in Geba” (ἐν Γαβα), indicating that if this were a textual corruption, it happened early. See L. W. Bat-ten, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 274; R. Coggins, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) 126; F. C. Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 248; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 328.

with a reference to the Levites as recipients of a portion of Judah and Benjamin.

Even though the LXX material is much shorter than the MT, as we shall see, it is noteworthy that the general order of the towns is the same, and thus the layout of the list retains the same general structure in both the MT and LXX. Moreover, the boundaries preserved in Neh 11:25–36 LXX and MT are similar in size from north to south. Even with the very cursory list in the LXX, which only lists six towns of settlement, the southernmost settlement of Beersheba is found in both texts. Geba and Michmash, however, mark the northernmost area in the LXX where the Benjaminites are said to have settled, with the Levites granted a portion in them.¹⁶ This is not the case in the MT. It is also notable that the LXX list is ordered in a very clear way, based on region and settlement type. The Judahite settlements are listed by name, associated settlements, fields, and then encampments. The Benjaminite settlements are much shorter and only contain one classification, which is the settlement name. As we shall see, the list found in the MT is not as well organized as is the list found in the LXX.

Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX Differences

MT Neh 11:25–36 contains more information than the LXX, creating a much more complete list of settlement for the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites. The MT additions are:

1. Neh 11:25, “and its dependencies, in Dibon, and its dependencies and in Jekabzeel and its villages” (ובנתיה ובדיבן) (ובנתיה וביקבצאל וחצריה)
2. Neh 11:26, “and in Moladah, and in Beth-Pelet” (ובמולדה ובבית פלת)
3. Neh 11:27, “and in Hazar-Shual” (ובחצר שואל)
4. Neh 11:28, “and in Ziklag, and in Meconah, and its dependencies” (ובצקלג ובמכנה ובבנתיה)

16. Several scholars have made a case for the list hearkening back to the boundaries found in 2 Kgs 23:8, when Josiah “brought all the priests out of the towns of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had made offerings, from Geba to Beersheba.” Edelman (*Origins*, 228) adds that in Neh 11:25–36, no settlements have been clearly identified lying south of Beersheba. While both the MT and LXX mention Beersheba, it is noteworthy that Nehemiah 11 MT and LXX do not end with Geba but push the boundaries north. In the LXX, the northernmost point is Michmash, and in the MT, the list moves north of Michmash to Bethel.

5. Neh 11:29, "and in En-Rimmon, and in Zorah, and in Jarmuth" (ובעיין רמון ובצרה ובירמות)
6. Neh 11:30, "Zenoah, Adullam . . . Azekah and its dependencies . . . to the Valley of Hinnom" (זנה עדלם . . . עזקה ובנתיה . . . עד) (גיא־הנחש)
7. Neh 11:31, "and Aija, and Bethel and its dependencies" (ועיה) (ובית־אל ובנתיה)
8. Neh 11:32, "Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah" (ענתות נב ענניה)
9. Neh 11:33, "Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim" (חצור רמה גתים)
10. Neh 11:34, "Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat" (חדיד צבעים נבלט)
11. Neh 11:35, "Lod, and Ono, the Valley of the Artisans" (לוד ואונו) (גיא החרשים)

The MT provides 33 places of settlement for the Judahites, Benjaminites, and the Levites, while the LXX lists six towns. The names that are not present in the LXX are located throughout the area of central Judah and the surrounding territories. Furthermore, the additions that are present in the MT but absent in the LXX are not found in a clear order. That is, there is no clear geographical sequence for the missing material, such as a north-south or east-west pattern, but the differences are substantial enough to make noticeable changes in the scope of settlement. The MT list has much more depth regarding settlement, mentioning towns throughout the areas of Judah and Benjamin, whereas the LXX list provides only a basic outline of the area of settlement, leaving out most of the area of Benjamin, and completely missing the northwest Shephelah.¹⁷ Also, there are more kinds of settlement in the MT.

In order to evaluate the reasons for the textual divergences between the MT and LXX, it is essential to investigate whether the text preserved in the LXX is shorter because of textual corruption or conversely because the LXX is older and more original. To be sure, if the LXX list were shorter than the MT because of textual corruption, then there would be signs of this corruption.¹⁸ But if the LXX text is shorter than

17. In Carter's discussion of Persian-period settlement, he argues that the sites in the Shephelah and the coastal plain (Lod, Ono, Hadid) are particularly problematic when constructing the boundaries of Yehud because of the geological landscape that naturally forms buffers between the Shephelah and the coastal plain. Thus, these different regions would have formed separate districts (*Emergence of Yehud*, 91). In the case of the LXX, both the coastal plain and most of the Shephelah (with the exception of Lachish) are absent from the list.

18. Certain types of corruption would be evident such as haplography or parablepsis (either through homoioteleuton or homoiioarkton).

the MT because it is the older material, then there would be signs of additions to the text.¹⁹

First, examining the text critical differences between Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX, there are possible cases of haplography in the LXX text from the MT, if one posits that the MT reflects the older material. The first case of possible haplography occurs in v. 25 after Kiriath-Arba (בְּקִרְיַת הָאַרְבַּע). The LXX does not contain the phrase “and its dependencies, and in Dibon and its dependencies, and in Jekabzeel and its villages” (וּבִנְתִּיָּה וּבִדְבוֹן וּבִנְתִּיָּה וּבִקְבָצָאֵל וּחֲצִרֶיהָ). The parallel text commences again with the reference to “and in Jeshua” (וּבִישׁוּעַ) in v. 26. This omission could be a case of homoioarkton, where the LXX writer may have skipped over everything after Kiriath-Arba, leaving out the towns of Dibon and Jekabzeel, along with their dependencies or villages. Haplography may have been triggered by the conjunctive *waw*, where the copyist skipped over וּבִנְתִּיָּה and the subsequent material, moving to (וּבִישׁוּעַ).²⁰ In Neh 11:26–27a MT, there is another case of possible homoioarkton triggered by the conjunctive *waw*. After Jeshua (וּבִישׁוּעַ) the LXX does not contain “and in Moladah, and Beth-pelet and in Hazar-shual” (וּבַמּוֹלָדָה וּבֵית פֶּלֶת וּבְחָצֵר שׁוּאֵל). The corresponding material again resumes with “and in Beersheba” (וּבַבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע). Other possible cases of haplography may be found in vv. 27b–30a and vv. 31b–35. Both examples may be cases of homoioarkton, where the copyist skipped over several settlements, again triggered by the prefix *waw*.

A final textual divergence between the MT and LXX concerning the Judahites is found in Neh 11:30b. The LXX states, “and they encamped in Beersheba” (καὶ παρεβόλοσαν ἐν Βεηρσαβεε), but the MT states “and they encamped from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom” (וַיֵּחָנוּ מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע עַד־גִּיאֵהֶנָּם).²¹ Beersheba appears in both versions, but the LXX

19. Some of these “signs of additions” include glossing, wherein a scribe would add material in order to explain a word or phrase. Other reasons may be the result of additions caused by the influence of similar material on the text, dittography, or explications to make implicit the explicit. See P. K. McCarter, *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) for further discussion on kinds of textual additions that commonly appear in the Bible and other ancient manuscripts.

20. It may have also been triggered by the *waw* and *bet* combination at the beginning of both וּבִנְתִּיָּה and וּבִישׁוּעַ.

21. This textual difference may have been caused by haplography, where the copyist’s eye skipped over עַד־גִּיאֵהֶנָּם, triggered by the ׀ ending of Beersheba (בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע). But this is not a convincing argument because it does not fully explain why the rest of the phrase is omitted.

does not mention a northern Judahite boundary for this encampment, nor does the structure necessitate a northern point to the material. One could posit that the LXX retains the original reading, but through *bet/waw* confusion, the *bet* prefix became a *mem* prefix. When this occurred, the sentence became a fragment, and so “to the Valley of Hinnom” was added, possibly as a means of reconciling the odd phrase. Even so, the MT and LXX are in agreement concerning both dwelling in and encamping in Beersheba.²² The MT, however, creates much more freedom of movement throughout the interior of Judah with the addition of the Valley of Hinnom. In the LXX list, the interior is not a concern.

Although all of the textual discrepancies may be triggered by haplography, this is not the best explanation for the textual divergences between Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX. When considering the textual differences, it is more than just an issue of missing places—there are also certain terms to describe settlement that diverge. These differences are evidence against random textual subtractions. Rather, a fundamental change in textual material has occurred from text to text. In Neh 11:25–36 LXX, there are several key terms used to describe settlements, including *ἐπαιλεις* (villages), *ἀγρός* (field), and *παρεμβάλλω* (encampment). However, the MT settlement designation “its dependencies” (בנתיה) is completely absent from the LXX.²³ And in fact, this word is never found in the LXX Nehemiah material. In the MT, Kiriath-Arba, Dibon, Beersheba, Meconah, Azekah, and Bethel, are all said to have “dependencies” (בנתיה). But in the LXX, Kiriath-Arba and Beersheba are included in the list as having *ἐπαιλεις* (חצרים). Indeed, after mentioning Kiriath-Arba (v. 25), the MT reads, “and its dependencies (בנתיה), and in Dibon and its dependencies (בנתיה), and in Jekabzeel and its villages” (והצריה). This is not found in the corresponding LXX material. In 11:27b–30, the MT diverges from the LXX beginning with “and its dependencies” (בנתיה), then moves to Ziklag, Meconah “and its dependencies” (בנתיה), and continues with En-rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, Zanoah, and Adullam.

22. The use of both encamping and settling concerning Beersheba appears to be due to two issues: The first is that different kinds of settlements are represented, and, second, the list is a reflection of both the general area of settlement and actual places of settlement.

23. In other examples where “dependencies,” בנתיה, appears in the MT, the LXX most commonly uses *κώμη*, “town” (e.g., Num 21:32; 32:42; Josh 15:45, 47; 17:11, 16; 21:12; 1 Chr 2:23; 6:41; 18:1; 2 Chr 13:19; 28:18) and less frequently “daughters” *θυγάτηρ* (Judg 1:27; 11:26; 1 Macc 5:8, 58). The larger LXX corpus is aware of both terms, but not so in Nehemiah, which never uses *κώμη* or *θυγάτηρ*.

The material found in the LXX and MT converges again with the phrase “and its villages (וּחְצִירֵיהֶם), Lachish and its fields” (v. 30). For the MT, the villages are connected to Zanoah and Adullam (and possibly other towns), whereas the LXX refers to “their villages” and provides these outlying settlements as a summary to the list of the Judahite settlements (Kiriath-Arba, Jeshua, and Beersheba). The MT also includes “Azekah and its dependencies,” following Lachish and its fields in 11:30. As previously mentioned, Azekah is out of order, following geographical consideration, in the MT list because it should appear after Adullam, if one is moving in a north-to-south direction. There are two possible explanations for Azekah’s placement within the list: either the copyist forgot to add Azekah and remembered after copying Lachish, or the writer inserted his material in such a way that the copyist would not interrupt the pattern of settlements that he/she constructed within the list. In other words, it is possible that the copyist did not want to add Azekah and its dependencies after “and its villages” because this disrupted the original material preserved in the LXX.

Further support that the references to “dependencies” are a later addition is found in the heading of the text (v. 25). There is no reference to villages (חְצִירִים) with their dependencies (בְּנִתִּיהָ) mentioned in the heading, but rather v. 25 only mentions villages and fields. The absence of this material may be due to the fact that the heading was written for the original material (seen in Neh 11:25–36 LXX), and the author of the list found in the MT, when including “its dependencies” (בְּנִתִּיהָ), did not change the introduction.

Other MT changes include the addition of the Judahite encampment “to the Valley of Hinnom” (עֵדֶן-גִּיא־הַנֶּחֱם). The depiction of settlement in the MT, if taken literally, encompasses a large area, where “they encamped (יָחֲנוּ) from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom” (Neh 11:30). This is the second reference to Beersheba, which is found earlier in 11:27 where the Judahites are said to have settled or dwelt (יָשָׁב) in Beersheba. The verb חָנָה (“encamp”) appears more than 130 times in the MT, employing a wide range of meanings. “Encamp” (חָנָה) is used in several different contexts, including seminomadic camps (Gen 32:8, Judg 18:11), military camps (Josh 11:4, 1 Chr 12:23), and the exodus camp (Exod 18:5), to name a few.²⁴ In the case of Neh 11:30, the use of חָנָה (“encamp”) has been argued to be an allusion to the preexilic boundaries of Judah (late 7th century), which were from Beersheba to

24. J. Helfmeyer, “חָנָה” *TDOT* 5:4–19.

the Valley of Hinnom, namely, Jerusalem.²⁵ Because it follows the list of permanent settlements, the idea of encamping could mean anything from living for a short period time in one spot to something political or theological.²⁶

Furthermore, in the list preserved in the LXX, Neh 11:30 states, "And they encamped in Beersheba."²⁷ This verse directly parallels the beginning of Neh 11:30b MT, which states, "And they encamped from Beersheba," but does not include "to the Valley of Hinnom." Beersheba appears in both versions, but the LXX refrains from mentioning a northern boundary for this encampment. The corresponding Greek verb for the Hebrew verb *חנה*, which is *παρεμβάλλω*, also indicates that these were not permanent settlements but are places of "pitching tents" and therefore are moveable.²⁸

Even though the exact nature of this type of settlement differs in the LXX and MT, both lists are in agreement with regard to populations dwelling in and encamping near Beersheba. And although the MT and LXX texts are both claiming a settlement in Beersheba (11:27) and some type of encampment around Beersheba (11:30), by doing this, both texts are also clearly delineating their claim to the land. These lists are evoking the southern boundary of Judah as Beersheba, found in the settlement list in Joshua 20, which lists the territory from Dan to Beersheba.²⁹ Although Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX do not claim Dan or the area traditionally demarcated as Israel, the use of Beersheba as the southernmost settlement is also found in other boundary lists from the

25. See G. von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930) 21–25; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 350; Lipschits, "Literary and Ideological Aspects in Nehemiah 11," 424–36.

26. Helfmeyer, "*חנה*," 5:17. Williamson argues that the picture of encamping from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom may be used to evoke memories of the wilderness period where the people were encamped around the tabernacle (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 353). He disagrees with Kellermann, who argues for a military encampment. See U. Kellermann, "Die Listen in Nehemia 11 eine Dokumentation aus den letzten Jahren des Reiches Juda?" *ZDPV* 82 (1966) 209–27.

27. The LXX usually translates *חנה* as *παρεμβάλλω*. See L. Jonker, "*חנה*" *NIDOTTE* 2:192–96.

28. W. Bauer, "*παρεμβάλλω*" *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich: Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 630.

29. From Dan to Beersheba is also found in Judg 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20; 2 Sam 3:10, 17:11, 24:2, 24:15. From Beersheba to Dan, the reverse order of this list, is found in 1 Chr 21:2 and 2 Chr 30:5.

late monarchic period.³⁰ Furthermore, the allusion tying the encampment around the city of Jerusalem (that is, Valley of Hinnom) to encampment around the tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings is lacking in the LXX. With this very cursory list, the idea of encamping or pitching a tent has less of a connection to the wilderness days and more of a connection to what the LXX editor saw as an impermanent settlement that was placed somewhere within the realm of Beersheba—a likely location for nomadic settlement.

The MT provides a detailed list of the towns that certain Judahite, Benjaminite, and Levite families settled or encamped in during the Persian period. Neh 11:25–36 MT includes a much longer list, consisting of 17 different settlements for the Judahites and 16 settlements for the Benjaminites. This stands in contrast to Neh 11:25–36 LXX, which has four settlements for the Judahites and two for the Benjaminites.³¹ The names that are not present in the LXX are located throughout the area of central Judah and surrounding territories.³² Interestingly, the additions that are present in the MT are found in no clear order. That is to say, there is no clear geographical sequence for the missing material, such as a north-to-south or east-to-west order, but the differences are substantial enough to make changes to the scope of settlement. This change in the scope of settlement is due to the sheer number of settlements present in the MT that are not present in the LXX. The MT creates a much more detailed picture of settlement, mentioning towns throughout the areas of Judah and Benjamin, whereas the LXX list provides only a basic outline of territory through the placement of its 6 different towns.

Examining the settlement pattern, according to the MT, besides settling in the traditional heartland of Judah, the Judahites and Benjaminites also settled in the areas of the Phoenician plain, the Negev, the Shephelah, and the territory of Benjamin. It is difficult to plot all place names mentioned in Neh 11:25–36, but individual places may be lo-

30. For a discussion of the expression *מבאר שבע עד* (“from Beersheba to . . .”), see I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winoona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 273 and n. 82. This phrase places Beersheba first and Dan last. Kalimi assesses the reality of these boundaries, pointing out that it is problematic because Beersheba was out of the boundaries of Yehud during the Chronicler’s lifetime.

31. Both the MT and LXX totals only count Beersheba once.

32. Several towns in the MT list have not been clearly identified. These include Jekabzeel, Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet, Hazar-shual, Meconah, Anathoth, Aija, Nob, Hazor, Gittaim, and Zeboim.

cated with some certainty, and others may be located within a general region.³³ In the MT, Kiriath-Arba is found in the territory of Judah; Zenoah, Zorah, Jarmuth, Adullam, Lachish, and Azekah are in the Shephelah; Dibon, Jekabzeel, Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-Pelet, Hazar-Shual, Beersheba, Ziklag, and En-Rimmon are in the Negev; the towns of Anathoth, Ramah, Geba, Micmash, Bethel, Aija, Nob, Ananiah, and Hazor are in Benjamin; and finally Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, Lod, Ono, and Gittaim are located along the coastal plain. Like the MT, the LXX list may be divided into different regions and, thus, demarcate the towns of settlement. In the LXX, the only areas mentioned are Judah with Kiriath-Arba, the town of Lachish in the Shephelah, Jeshua and Beersheba in the Negev, and Geba and Michmash in Benjamin. Although the LXX has very few places listed, it is significant that, with the exception of the towns along the coastal plain, the same general boundaries are achieved from north to south in both lists. The major differences in settled area are found from east to west, especially concerning the coastal plain cities located to the northwest. These east-to-west differences may be explained as a later expansion, encompassing more territory than what was originally envisioned.

Furthermore, the LXX simply sketches an outline of settlements for both Judah and Benjamin, whereas the additions found in the MT list create zones of settlement with some depth, around Judah and then Benjamin. This image of settlement becomes not simply about the regions of settlement but also the free movement of the interior for the Judahites and, thus, full claim to the entire area. Though the editor of the material that is reserved in the MT made changes to the list, the changes are mostly concerned with adding more names and settlement types to fill out the list, thereby dramatically changing it. It was no longer a select settlement list with people encamping in the periphery, but rather a settlement list encompassing a number of settlements for the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites, set within the context of the Persian period. It also undoes the careful construction of the LXX list, which is towns, towns with associated villages, and encampments for the Judahites, and towns for the Benjaminites. The MT does not have

33. Blenkinsopp offers a list of these settlements according to their region, (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 330–32). See also E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, vol. 2: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods 732–332 B.C.* (New York: Doubleday, 2001) 429; Edelman, *Origins*, 226–28. Lipschits also nicely lays out the areas according to the different lists in Ezra and Nehemiah in terms of region, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 156–57.

such a structured order to settlement type, when one looks beyond the categories of tribal affiliation (Judah or Benjamin) and region.

The Context for Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX

Because there does not appear to be any reason for the absence of material in Neh 11:25–36 LXX, the modern reader is left with two possible explanations for the differences in the two texts. The first possibility is that Neh 11:25–36 LXX has edited the material from Neh 11:25–36 MT and intentionally cut out names and information from the MT.³⁴ The second possibility is that Neh 11:25–36 LXX remains the older text, preserving what was reflected in an earlier form of the MT or a proto-rabbinic version of the Nehemiah material. The second argument appears to be the most logical because there is no evidence for a later reworking of the MT in the LXX. In Tov's analysis of the two sources, he observes, "When comparing the LXX evidence with that of the other sources, we find that beyond the MT, the LXX is the single most important source preserving redactionally different material relevant to the literary analysis of the text, often earlier than MT."³⁵ In the case of Nehemiah 11, the differences in the material are best explained this way and by applying the hypercritical theory of *lectio brevior*, where the shorter text reflects the older text and the longer reflects the younger, thus clarifying the large discrepancies that are at work in this text.

The Greek text of Nehemiah has a relatively literal translation from the Hebrew, and thus it would be logical to maintain that the shorter LXX text in comparison to the MT text is the "shorter Hebrew parent text."³⁶ Hence, it appears that Neh 11:25–36 LXX is based not on the present form of Neh 11:25–36 MT but on a more cursory list from a proto-rabbinic text. This same pattern is seen in Neh 11:3–24 and chap. 12, which is also full of textual variances between the MT and LXX. To be sure, this is not an argument for separate textual tradi-

34. This also takes into consideration an editor or editors accidental omission of names due to scribal errors. This does not appear to be the case, however, when examined with the rest of the text-critical differences between MT and LXX Nehemiah 11–12.

35. Tov, "The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources" in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible* (ed. A. Schenker: Leiden: Brill, 2003) 120.

36. Knoppers, "Sources, Revisions, and Editions," 149. See also McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 94.

tions, which appears in other cases where the MT and LXX traditions significantly diverge from one another.³⁷ Rather, the LXX and the MT versions of Neh 11:3–12:47 represent two stages in the growth of the text that are very similar to each other but differ in size and names.³⁸

Furthermore, Tov observes that, traditionally, the differences in the LXX from the MT have been attributed to two factors: first, the Hebrew texts that were used for the translation were not used by the circles that “embraced MT”; and second, the early date for the translation into Greek (275–150 B.C.E.) used earlier Hebrew manuscripts that reflect earlier traditions of the texts.³⁹ In the second instance, the Greek translators were using an earlier Hebrew text. Tov posits that the editorial stage of the MT already existed when the LXX was created.⁴⁰ And thus, by the time of the translation of the MT into Greek, editing was not a new phenomenon.

Turning to the purpose of Neh 11:25–36, the exact nature of this list has been debated for some time.⁴¹ Does this list reflect Judean settlement in the Persian period?⁴² Is this a reflection of an earlier list, used during the Persian, Hellenistic, or even Maccabean period to bolster

37. This is seen in texts such as 1 Samuel and Jeremiah, where the MT and LXX have significantly different texts.

38. Knoppers argues that the MT has been expanded, and so LXX Nehemiah represents an earlier version of the text (“Sources, Revisions, and Editions,” 149).

39. Tov, “The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences between the LXX and MT S T V,” 122.

40. Ibid., 140.

41. D. J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 220; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 90–100; Lipschits, “Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” 427–40; and D. Janzen, “Politics, Settlement, and Temple Community in Persian-Period Judah,” *CBQ* (2002) 490–510; Edelman, *Origins*, 222–30.

42. See Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 191; Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 220; J. Weinberg, *The Citizen-Temple Community* (trans. D. L. Smith-Christopher; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 49–61; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 90–100; Janzen, “Politics, Settlement,” 499. These scholars argue for an actual depiction of settlement during the Persian period. Myers asserts that because the Judahites would have been citizens of the Persian Empire, they had the right to return to their ancestral homes and resettle this region. Janzen points to 4th-century epigraphic evidence, arguing that the settlements in some of the contested areas, particularly the Negev, would have been possible. He believes that the exiles could have returned to their ancestral homes, even if they were outside the Persian-period province.

the size of Persian-period Judah?⁴³ Or is this a reflection of later Judean settlements in post-Persian-period Judah?⁴⁴ If Neh 11:25–36 MT is not taken as a reflection of any Judahite reality, then what is the purpose of this list? Is it an idealized projection of what an author or authors wished Judah to be?⁴⁵ All of these questions should be considered independently with the MT and LXX lists in mind. Although these lists may ultimately help the reader understand the size and scope of Judah, the primary purpose of this examination is to understand the nature of Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX and the differences between the two.

Several lists have been compared to Neh 11:25–36, including the list of the tribal allotment of areas found in Joshua 15 for the Judahites and Joshua 18 for the Benjaminites, as well as the postexilic settlement lists found in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 and the list of wall builders in Nehemiah 3. The connections and discrepancies in these lists may elucidate the function of Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX, but previous comparisons have mostly taken into consideration Neh 11:25–36 MT. The following

43. Von Rad maintains that the “Chronicler” used a Josianic period list (that is, Joshua 15) to construct MT Neh 11:25–36 (*Das Geschichtsbild*, 21–25). Lipschits (“Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” 427–40) is in agreement with von Rad and contends that this list was constructed in order to depict an idealized view of Persian-period Judah, building on Joshua 15. See also Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 350; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 329–30; and Edelman, *Origins*, 228. Kellermann (“Die Listen,” 209–27) argues that, because the southern boundary of Neh 11:25–36 is problematic in the Persian period, it best describes the southern boundary of Judah from the late 8th century until the fall of the Kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C.E.

44. D. Böhler, “On the Relationship between Textual and Literary Criticism: The Two Recensions of the Book of Ezra: Ezra–Neh (MT) and 1 Esdras (LXX)” in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible* (SBLSCS 52; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 48, advocates a later date. He maintains that the MT echoes a Maccabean reality because the list encompasses the scope of Judah during that period of time. He also argues for a second-century B.C.E. redaction of Nehemiah 11 (as reflected in the MT), because the settlement list could not have been possible before the Maccabean period. He sees a “Nehemiah renaissance” under the Hasmoneans, when an editor reworked both Ezra–Nehemiah for the purpose of the Maccabean government. Other scholars, such as Rudolph (*Ezra und Nehemia*, 189–91); S. Mowinckel (*Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemia* [3 vols.; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1964] 2:151); and A. Gunneweg (*Nehemia* [KAT 19/2; Gütersloh: Mohn 1987] 148–50), argue for a post-Persian-period context for Nehemiah 11. Alt (*Kleine Schriften*, 289–305) maintains that the list is made up of Levitical settlements, based on v. 36. Alt’s opinion, however, does not represent any current mainstream opinion.

45. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 328–30; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 346–50; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 127–40; Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 91.

examination will review the material found in Neh 11:25–36 MT and also move forward to discuss Neh 11:25–36 LXX.

There are several interesting similarities and differences concerning Neh 11:25–36 MT and Joshua 15 and 18.⁴⁶ Joshua 15 divides the settlement of the south into two districts that are particularly pertinent to this study; the towns found in the Negev (Josh 15:21–32) and towns in the lowlands (Josh 15:33–42).⁴⁷ In both areas, 16 of the 17 names listed for the settlement of the Judahites in Neh 11:25–30 MT are found in Josh 15:13, and 21–42, and all are in the same order except for Jarmuth, listed after Zanoah in Josh 15:35, and Lachish, which is listed before Azekah in Neh 11:30 MT but after it in the Joshua list.⁴⁸ Also, the Valley of Hinnom, which is the last place name in the Judahite list in Neh 11:25–30 MT, is found in both Josh 15:8 and 18:16, marking out the boundaries of the tribal settlements. The two towns that are not explicitly recorded in this list are Jeshua and Meconah, probably

46. Alt (*Kleine Schriften*, 193ff.) and Aharoni (*Land of the Bible*, 248) argue for two distinct sources for chaps. 13–19: boundary delineations and town lists. Aharoni believes the town lists came from the “administrative divisions of Judah and Israel,” while the boundary delineations were from records that defined the “tribal inheritance by delineating precise boundaries between the various tribes.” For a discussion of the text-critical issues in the MT and LXX Joshua lists, see J. Svensson, *Towns and Toponyms in the Old Testament* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994).

47. The classic study of Joshua 15 is Alt, “Judas Gaue unter Josiah,” *Palästina-jahrbuch* 21 (1925) 100–116. Alt dates the list to the time of Josiah’s reforms. Other scholars argue for an earlier date, including F. M. Cross and G. E. Wright, “The Boundary Province List of Judah,” *JBL* 75 (1956) 209–26. Cross and Wright place the district divisions in the framework of the time of Jehoshaphat. See also Z. Kallai, “The Town Lists of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, and Dan,” *VT* 8 (1958) 134–60; and idem, “Note on the Town Lists of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, and Dan,” *VT* 11 (1961) 223–27. Kallai argues for four separate lists written at different times, with the earliest list dated to the reign of King David. K. D. Schunck (“Bemerkungen zur Ortsliste von Benjamin [Jos 18, 21–28],” *ZDPV* 78 [1962] 142–58) makes a case for a date of the composition of Joshua 15 to be around the time of Uzziah. N. Na’aman champions the position of Alt, pointing to the geopolitical circumstances of the late seventh and early sixth centuries, as well as the archaeological data. For an overview of the different scholarly discussions concerning the date of composition, see Na’aman, “Josiah and the Kingdom of Judah,” in *Good Kings and Bad Kings* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 189–247, esp. pp. 201–2.

48. En-Rimmon (Neh 11:29 MT) is listed as two places, Ain and Rimmon, in Josh 15:32. In Neh 11:30 MT, Lachish and Azekah are listed next to each other. In Joshua, Azekah is listed in v. 35, whereas Lachish is listed in v. 39.

located in the south in the area around Beersheba.⁴⁹ In contrast to the similarities between the Judahite settlement lists in Joshua 15 and Neh 11:25–30 MT, the Benjaminite settlement lists in Josh 18:21–28 overlaps very little with the list in Neh 11:31–35 MT. Of the 16 towns listed in Neh 11:31–35 MT, only Bethel, Geba, and Ramah are found in Josh 18:21–28 (Michmash, Aija, Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, Hazor, Gittaim, Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, Lod, Ono, and the Valley of the Artisans are not listed). Hence, the Judahite settlement in Neh 11:25–30 has many parallels with Joshua 15, but the Benjaminite list in 11:31–35 only has a small overlap with Joshua 18.

Four of the six places listed in Neh 11:25–36 LXX, namely, Kiriath-Arba, Jeshua, Lachish, Beersheba, Geba, and Michmash, also are included in Joshua 15 and 18. In Joshua 15, Kiriath-Arba (or Hebron) is listed as a city where Caleb and the children of Judah were given as inheritance (Josh 15:13). Beersheba (Josh 15:28) and Lachish (Josh 15:39) are also found in the list of settlement for Judah in Joshua 15. Because three of the four towns from the Judahite settlement list in Neh 11:25–30 LXX are also present in Joshua 15, it is likely that Joshua 15 influenced the writer responsible for the list used in the LXX. Whereas Geba and Michmash both appear as Benjaminite settlements in the LXX, only Geba is found in the Benjaminite settlement list in Joshua 18.⁵⁰

Another important set of lists to consider when examining Neh 11:25–36 is Ezra 2:20–33 // Neh 7:25–38.⁵¹ First, looking at these lists in

49. Blenkinsopp contends that Jeshua could be another name for Shema, mentioned in Josh 15:26 (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 331–32). Rainey and Notley do not make this connection between Jeshua and Shema (cf. Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge*, 12 and 152). See also Edelman, *Origins*, 226–32.

50. Geba is mentioned several times, including Josh 18:24, 21:17; 1 Sam 14:5; and 1 Chr 6:8. Michmash first appears in 1 Sam 14:5, located in the vicinity of Geba.

51. Scholars have varying interpretations regarding the composition of the lists as well as the different interpretations regarding the purpose of the lists. K. Galling in his work “The Gola-List according to Ezra 2/Nehemiah 7,” *JBL* 70 (1951) 149–58, argues that the lists were an attempt to respond to the challenges by the Samaritan community and an opportunity for the *golah* community to make clear legal and ecclesiastical claims to the land. This, however, is not a popular opinion. Concerning the composition of the list, most scholars, including Batten (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 71), Rudolph (*Ezra und Nehemia*, 26), Z. Schneider (*Die Bücher Ezra und Nehemia übersetzt und erklärt* [Die heilige Schrift des Alten testaments I4/2; Bonn: Hanstein, 1959] 37), S. Japhet (“Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel against the Background of the Historical and Religious Tendencies in Ezra–Nehemiah,” *ZAW* 94 [1982] 84), Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 29–32), Clines (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 45), B. Halpern (“A Historiographic Commentary

light of Neh 11:25–36 MT, Ezra 2:20–33 // Neh 7:25–38 are primarily concerned with the region that is traditionally the territory of the Benjaminites. These parallel lists, however, also mention cities found along the coastal plain and also the northern region of the tribe of Judah. The overlap in cities found in these lists are Anathoth, Ramah, Geba, Michmash, Bethel, Ai (Aija), Nebo (possibly Nob), Hadid, Lod, and Ono. Thus, 10 names are associated with both the parallel settlement lists in Ezra 2:20–33 // Neh 7:25–38 and Neh 11:25–36 MT. It should be pointed out that none of the names from the Judahite settlement lists in Neh 11:25–36 MT appears in the settlement list in Ezra 2:20–33 // Neh 7:25–38, but this is due to the fact that these parallel lists are not concerned with the towns in the south but appear to be focused on the resettlement of the region around Jerusalem and in the area of Benjamin, as well as a few towns in the coastal plain.⁵²

There are also a few overlaps with Neh 11:25–36 LXX. Both Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 list Geba (Ezra 2:23 // Neh 7:30) and Michmash (Ezra 2:27 // Neh 7:31). Additionally, there are several names in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 that overlap with the list in Joshua 15 as well as MT Neh 11:25–36. Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 do not list Kiriath-Arba, Jeshua,

on Ezra 1–6: Achronological Narrative and Dual Chronology in Israelite Historiography,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* [ed. W. H. Propp, B. Haplern, and D. N. Freedman; BJSUCSD 1; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990] 95–96), and Edelman (*Origins*, 175), believe that Ezra 2 borrows the parallel material from Neh 7:6–73. Certain scholars argue that Nehemiah takes the material from Ezra, including H. Schaeder (*Esra der Schreiber* [Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 5; Tübingen: Mohr, 1930] 19–24) and, more recently, Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 83). Others argue for a common source that both texts use independently of each other, including Brockington (*Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* [NCB; London: Thomas Nelson, 1969] 49) and Fensham (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 49). Disagreeing with Torrey’s interpretation in *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra–Nehemiah* (BZAW 2; Giessen: Ricker, 1896) 39–50, that the lists are completely fictional in nature, Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 83) supports a mid-fifth century date for the composition of the material. Earlier scholars tended to view the list as showing different periods of return within the context of the beginning of the return (Galling, “Gola-List,” 150–51; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 15–26). A marked change in interpretation, following Batten’s earlier discussion (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 72–75), now views this list as a condensation of several periods of return, into the mid-fifth century. See Carter, *Emergence of Yehud*, 75 n. 5; and Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 159–60, for a bibliography and discussion of this interpretation.

52. Both Ezra 2:1 and Neh 7:6 state, “they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town,” which is focused around the central hill country and to the northwest of this region.

Beersheba, or Lachish, but these cities are found in the south, which is not the concern of the lists in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7.

Another list to consider when examining the Judahite and Benjaminite settlement in Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX is the list of wall builders in Nehemiah 3.⁵³ The list is often argued to be set within the context of people contemporary to Nehemiah in the mid-fifth century B.C.E., during the reign of Artaxerxes.⁵⁴ These were the men who were purported to have helped Nehemiah reconstruct the walls.⁵⁵ Within this chapter, there are multiple lists, including genealogies, people and the places where they reside, and a list of towns where some of the wall builders lived. Similarly to Nehemiah 11, Nehemiah 3 is not simply a list of towns; it also lists people and their place within the larger Judean settlement. The places mentioned in Nehemiah 3 are mostly located in the Judean Hill Country, with the exception of Jericho. In relation to Neh 11:25–35 MT, the only overlap is the town of Zanoah, which is mentioned in Neh 11:30 MT.

53. Several scholars have examined the wall building activities depicted in Nehemiah 3, including Fensham (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 169–79), Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 198–212), Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 227–42), N. A. Bailey (“Nehemiah 3, 1–32: An Introduction to the Text and the Topography,” *PEQ* 122 [1990] 34–40), Carter (*Emergence of Yehud*, 56–57), Grabbe (*Ezra–Nehemiah* [OT Readings; London: Routledge, 1998] 43–44) and Lipschits (*Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 168–74; see also his work in this volume, “Nehemiah 3: Sources, Composition, and Purpose,” pp. 73–99).

54. There are, however, several interpretations concerning the compositional date of this material and the original form of this material. Several scholars argue that this list originated during the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the list was then stored in the archives. The location and type of archive is debated. Interpretations range from the temple archives (Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 112; Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 200), the city archives (Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 172; Grabbe *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 43) or even simply originally recorded in the text (Coggins, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 81; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 232). For a discussion of these different interpretations, see Edelman, *Origins*, 210–11.

55. Nehemiah 3 interrupts the first-person narrative found in chaps. 1–2 and 4. Because the list is written in third person, even when discussing Nehemiah (v. 5), many scholars believe this list is an insertion into the Nehemiah Memoir material. See, for example, J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und Jüdische Geschichte* (9th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959) 168; Torrey, *Composition and Historical Value*, 37–38; Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 206–7; Gunneweg, *Nehemia*, 75–76; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 231; J. Wright, *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah-Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 118–20. Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 231) argues this is an independent source that was inserted into the NM in order to expand the “allusions” to the wall-building activities.

Because Zanoah does not appear in Neh 11:25–35 LXX, there is no overlap between the LXX material and Nehemiah 3. In view of the fact that many scholars rely on Nehemiah 3 to outline the districts of Judah during the time of Nehemiah, this lack of overlap has important implications regarding the purpose and date of the Nehemiah 11 material.⁵⁶ If Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX are simply considered boundary lists of settlement, providing the extent of Persian period settlement, then the lack of overlap is problematic. However, if one interprets the settlements, particularly Neh 11:25–30 MT, as encompassing towns outside the region of Judah proper, or administrative Judah, then the lack of overlap is not troubling but expected. The population to rebuild the walls was only drawn from the administrative province of Judah. This does not mean that all of the Judahites, Benjaminites, and Levites lived within the administrative boundaries of Judah proper. What is clear is that Nehemiah 3 did not influence the composition of Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX in any direct way.

Given that the Levites are mentioned in both Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX as settling among the Benjaminites, a closer examination of this third tribe should be fruitful. Because the Judahites and Benjaminites are mentioned, Williamson points out that it is not surprising that the Levites are also mentioned.⁵⁷ These three tribes play an important role in postexilic literature such as 1 Chronicles 2–9, where their genealogies are the most conspicuous.⁵⁸ Although the Levites are mentioned in Neh 11:36 LXX, there is very little connection to the other Levitical town lists, such as Joshua 21 and 1 Chronicles 6.⁵⁹ From Joshua 21, two names are found from Neh 11:25–36 LXX: Kiriath-Arba (Josh 21:11) and Geba (Josh 21:17). In the Levitical list in 1 Chronicles 6, Kiriath-Arba, called Hebron, is mentioned (1 Chr 6:55), as well as Geba (1 Chr 6:60).⁶⁰ Thus, based on the two names that overlap with the Levitical lists in Joshua

56. For a discussion of the districts of Judah, see Edelman, *Origins*, 213–23; Lipschits, *Fall and Rise of Jerusalem*, 168–74; and Rainey and Notley, *Sacred Bridge*.

57. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 353.

58. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9* (AB 12, New York: Doubleday, 2003) 260–61.

59. In the case of Neh 11:25–36 MT, there are five towns that are found in Joshua 21: Kiriath-Arba (Hebron), Debir, Geba, Jarmuth, and Anathoth. For 1 Chronicles 6, there are four towns: Hebron (6:55, 57), Debir (6:58), Geba, and Anathoth (6:60).

60. Blenkinsopp notes in his discussion of Neh 11:25–36 MT that this list is not copying the Levitical settlements because there are only four names that occur in both lists (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 329).

21 and 1 Chronicles 6, the resettlement of the tribe of Levi has little in common with these other lists.

The overlap in the lists found in Joshua 15, 18, and 21, 1 Chronicles 6, Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7, and Nehemiah 3 points out the frequency with which the places in Neh 11:25–36 LXX are mentioned in other lists. Yet it also highlights the importance of Joshua 15, or a list similar to this, for the composition of the earlier list found in Neh 11:25–36 LXX as well as later additions to this list, which is found in Neh 11:25–36 MT, where several more of the names appear in Joshua 15. It is also noteworthy that there are only a few names found in this original list, indicating intentional selection of this material, not a select exegesis of Joshua 15.

With all of these parallel texts in mind, it appears that in the history of the development of the LXX with regard to Nehemiah 11, later witnesses corrected toward the emerging proto-rabbinic text so that some of the lacunae that one finds in the earliest form of the LXX are corrected in additions that harmonize toward the proto-MT. Why do these different textual traditions continue until such a late date? The answer is best addressed in Emmanuel Tov's study of the development of the LXX, where he outlines a four-step process through which the LXX and MT became mostly standard. Tov's step one is simply the original translation. Step two consists of the presence of "a multitude of textual traditions" that arose out of the "insertions of corrections (mainly to the Hebrew) in all known individual scrolls in the pre-Christian period, and to a lesser extent in the first century CE."⁶¹ Step three reflects the process of stabilization in the first two centuries C.E. that occurred because of a continuation of certain textual traditions, which also marks the discontinuation of other traditions. Finally, step four begins the "creation of new textual groups and the contamination of existing ones through the influence of the text of the revisions of Origen and Lucian in the third and fourth century CE."⁶²

In Tov's model for the development of the LXX, the first three steps are particularly applicable for the study of Neh 11:25–36, beginning with the original translation. The LXX translated the proto-rabbinic text into Greek. Then, in Tov's step two, corrections and insertions to all known individual texts, specifically relating to the Hebrew texts, were carried out. This occurred because the proto-rabbinic text editors felt the need to add material, specifically correcting 11:25–35. Next, textual stabilization brought about the proposed end of different traditions

61. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 11.

62. *Ibid.*

popping up and creating more textual divergences. These textual variances continued on their own until later LXX editors attempted to standardize the two versions. Thus, Tov assumes that the later LXX editors were able to read Hebrew and spot the divergences and fix them, which clearly is the case. This standardization is in later LXX editions where they attempt to harmonize the MT and LXX divergences.

Conclusion

Neh 11:25–36 LXX appears to preserve redactionally shorter and older material, which was developed from an earlier or proto-MT version of MT Neh 11:25–36. The LXX reflects, in this case, an earlier editorial stage of the text. Later, the text preserved in Neh 11:25–36 MT was reedited, adding many more settlements, thereby encompassing a much larger area than the earlier LXX list, which contained only six different place names. The LXX provided an earlier list of settlements, which hearkens back to the language of late-monarchic Judah by demarcating its boundaries from Beersheba to the region around Jerusalem. The later Neh 11:25–36 MT retains this form but more directly states that the people encamped from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom, or Jerusalem. Although this was an idealized area of settlement, it does reflect a later desire to bolster the importance of the resettlement of the Judahites, Benjaminites and Levites placed within the context of the Persian period. It also seems unlikely that the later MT list dates to the Persian period at all, but it rather more likely dates to the later Hellenistic period.⁶³

Consequently, a comparison between the Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX provides biblical scholars with a good case study for understanding the stages of the redaction of Ezra–Nehemiah. This rare opportunity helps illuminate certain issues such as the date and composition of specific texts. Neh 11:25–36 MT and LXX are the sort of texts that reflect the complex nature of biblical composition. This case study of Neh 11:25–36 LXX and its differences from the MT offers a window into the compositional process of the book itself. With this intriguing glimpse, the use of textual criticism to help inform literary criticism and historical reconstructions becomes all the more striking.

[Appendix 1 is on p. 222.]

63. Space does not permit me to discuss the date of the MT and LXX lists in more detail. For a comprehensive analysis of the context for both lists, see my *Mapping Early Jewish Tradition*.

Appendix 1. The Texts of Nehemiah 11:25–36 MT and LXX

25. And (to) these <u>are</u> the villages, with their fields: Some of the sons of Judah resided in Kiriath-Arba <u>and its dependencies</u> , and in Dibon <u>and its dependencies</u> , and in Jekabzeel and its villages,	ואלה החצרים בשדתם מבני יהודה ישבו בקרית הארבע ובנתיה ודיבון ובנתיה וביקבצאל וחצריה:
26. and in Jeshua <u>and in Moladah and Beth-pelet</u> ,	ובישוע ובמולדה ובבית פלט:
27. <u>and in Hazar-shual</u> , and in Beersheba <u>and its dependencies</u> ,	ובחצר שועל ובבאר שבע ובנתיה:
28. <u>and in Ziklag</u> , in Meconah <u>and its dependencies</u> ,	ובצקלג ובמכנה ובבנתיה:
29. <u>and in En-rimmon</u> , in Zorah, in Jarmuth,	ובעין רמון ובצרעה ובירמות:
30. <u>Zanoah, Adullam</u> , and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah <u>and its dependencies</u> . So they encamped from (<i>in</i>) Beersheba <u>to the Valley of Hinnom</u> .	זנח עדלם וחצריהם לכיש ושדתיה עזקה ובנתיה ויחנו מבאר [בבאר] שבע עד גיא־הנחם:
31. And some of the sons of Benjamin: <i>from</i> Geba: Michmash, and Aija, and Bethel <u>and its dependencies</u> ,	ובני בנימן מגבע מכמש ועיה ובית אל־ובנתיה:
32. <u>Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah</u> ,	ענתות נב ענניה:
33. <u>Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim</u> ,	חצור רמה גתים:
34. <u>Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat</u> ,	חדיד צבעים נבלט:
35. <u>Lod, and Ono, the Valley of the Artisans</u> .	לד ואונו גי החרשים
36. And of the Levites, divisions of Judah to Benjamin.	ומן־הלויים מחלקות יהודה לבנימין:

The underlined passages indicate the material not present in the LXX text but present in the MT. The words in brackets represent words that are only found in the LXX.

The Census List in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7: A Suggestion

PAUL L. REDDITT

Scholars routinely discuss the sources employed by the redactor(s) of Ezra–Nehemiah. After the so-called “Memoirs” of both, and the lengthy Aramaic section of Ezra (4:8–6:18), the census list, which appears in Ezra 2 and in Nehemiah 7, is the longest. One feature scholars typically mention is that the numbers of returnees by fathers’ houses and by cities given in Ezra 2:3–60 (29,818 total) // Neh 7:8–62 (31,089 total) do not agree with the total given in Ezra 2:64–65 // Neh 7:66–67 (42,360, plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 singers).¹ Scholars have offered a variety of explanations: (1) names of some returnees fell out of the lists; (2) some exiles who enrolled to return changed their minds and did not stay in Judah; (3) many died on the trip; (4) minors may have been enrolled in one version of the list but not the other;² (5) the list contained counts of people from Judah and Benjamin only, while the total number includes people from other tribes;³ and (6) women were not counted in the numbers by fathers’ houses but were included in the total.⁴ The fact, however, that the total agrees exactly in both chapters despite the differences in the numbers in the lists suggests that *the*

Author’s note: I would like to thank Professor Isaac Kalimi for his significant suggestions that contributed greatly to the present shape of this essay.

1. Ezra 2:65 says there were 240 singers, Neh 7:67 says 245 (cf. 1 Esd 5:42). Apparently, the final word *וחמשה* (and five) fell out of Ezra 2:65 in transmission.

2. A third version of the list in 1 Esdras specifically says (5:41) that children 12 and older were included in the count. The fourfold summary given above was by L. W. Batten, *The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 73–74.

3. A typical Jewish resolution of the matter mentioned by J. J. Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah* (Soncino Books of the Bible; London: Soncino, 1951) 124.

4. D. J. A. Clines, “Notes on Ezra 2:64 & 65,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (London: HarperCollins, 1993) 703.

total itself was significant, that it was supplied independently of the lists, and that the discrepancy between it and the numbers given by fathers' houses and cities was intentional. Accordingly, this essay will attempt to explain that difference. It will argue that the discrepancy between the total number of the entire population, 42,360 members of the assembly plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 singers, and the totals of those numbered by fathers' houses and by cities is one of the redactor's ways of substantiating that not everyone in the postexilic community belonged to the "true Israel." In arguing this position, this essay will first present a brief overview of scholarly opinion about the census list.

A Review of the Issue

Scholarly opinion about the provenance and accuracy of Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 has varied but can be sketched easily. One view, of course, is that the list is exactly what it purports to be, namely, a list of the returned exiles from 538 (which one would expect based on the ending of Ezra 1) and/or 521 (presumably the date for Zerubbabel and Jeshua). This view has been expanded to say that the author also found the list already in Nehemiah's memoirs.⁵ Early in the 20th century, however, Loring W. Batten summarized the objections to this view: (1) the numbers are suspiciously large; (2) the inclusion of people numbered by place of residence suggests a time they were already settled in Judah, not 539 or 521; (3) the term "sons of the province" in Ezra 2:1 presupposes a time when the area was part of a regularly instituted Persian satrapy; (4) the suspension of priests from their duties presupposes a functioning temple; and (5) Ezra 2:68 at least implies that the temple was already standing.⁶ The suggestion that the list was the one given to Tattenai and that it contained the members of the temple community given to him

5. See, for example, W. Rudolph (*Esra und Nehemiah* [HAT 20; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1949] xxiii and 11–15), who dates the list to 537 (p. xxiii); cf. also O. Kaiser, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 551. One would expect, following Ezra 1, a group led by Sheshbazzar, who is not mentioned in Ezra 2 (or Nehemiah 7). One could simply say the author skipped ahead to Zerubbabel and Jeshua because of their importance in the narratives that follow Ezra 2. Still, Ezra 1–6 never calls Zerubbabel by a royal title like "signet ring" (as in Hag 2:23) or "governor" (as in Hag 1:1, 14; 2:2, 21), and the mention of Sheshbazzar perhaps lessens the importance of Zerubbabel by naming the former as the person to receive the commission to rebuild from the Persian king.

6. Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 72.

at his request (Ezra 5:3–4)⁷ fails on these same objections. A majority of scholars in the 20th century argued that the Chronicler found the list and supplied it both in Ezra 2 and in Nehemiah 7. Martin Noth may be taken as characteristic of these scholars. He argues that the list, which fits loosely in its context in Ezra (Ezra 2:70 follows well on 1:5–11), was inserted either by the Chronicler or a later editor.⁸ Ulrich Kellermann modifies this view, arguing that the list derived from the third or second century B.C.E. and was added to the text by a late interpolator.⁹

More recently, scholars have questioned whether Ezra–Nehemiah was the product of the Chronicler, a debate that continues today.¹⁰ In this debate, Hugh Williamson has advanced the view that the list found its place first in the book of Nehemiah, and its addition to Ezra came separately and later.¹¹ The list, however, stands as loosely in its context in Nehemiah as in Ezra, with Williamson himself arguing that the narrative continuation of Neh 7:1–5a is Neh 11:1–2 and Titus Reinmuth arguing that the continuation is 12:27–43.¹² In view of the list's apparent

7. K. Galling, "The 'Göla-List according to Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7,'" *JBL* 70 (1951) 149–58; cf. K. Galling, *Die Bücher der Chronik, Esra, Nehemia* (ATD 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954) 191.

8. M. Noth, *The Chronicler's History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 43, 61.

9. U. Kellermann, *Nehemia: Quellen, Überlieferung und Geschichte* (BZAW 102; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967) 99.

10. For a negative judgment, see S. Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *VT* 18 (1968) 330–32; H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 5–70; S. I. L. Norin, *Sein Name allein ist hoch* (trans. C. Boehncke Sjöberg; ConBOT 24; Lund: Gleerup, 1986) 162–200, esp. p. 196; and I. Kalimi, *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (SSN 46; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005) 41–65 esp. pp. 54–56. Scholars arguing that the Chronicler was responsible for Ezra–Nehemiah as well include D. J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1984) 25–31; A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Esra* (KAT 19/1; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1985) 21–28 and *Nehemiah* (KAT 19/2; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1987) 24–28; J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 47–54; J. Becker, *Der Ich-Bericht des Nehemiabuches als chronistische Gestaltung* (FB 87; Würzburg: Echter, 1998). See the review by M. Saebø, "Chronistische Theologie/Chronistisches Geschichtswerk," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1981) 8:74–87.

11. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 29–32, 267–69.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 268. T. Reinmuth, *Der Bericht Nehemias* (OBO 183; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002) 209.

secondary placement in both Ezra and Nehemiah, the safer approach for this essay would be to assume a common redactor who placed the same list in both contexts and leave aside the question of his identity (that is, whether it was the Chronicler—the author/redactor of 1 and 2 Chronicles—or someone else). The task at hand, instead, is to determine the purpose for including the list with its totals.

A New Suggestion

A proper resolution of this issue depends first on analyzing the two chapters to determine what they actually contain. This objective can be met most easily by reporting the results in the form of a table followed by an explanation. That explanation will show that the two chapters employ the same list of persons (see table 1), each of which a redactor “tweaks” to suit his own purposes.

Ezra 2:1–2a // Nehemiah 7:6–7a

First, the redactor introduces the list with the claim that the people in it are those who returned from Babylon to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and others.¹³ While some exiles in Babylon clearly chose to return, perhaps in a series of returns beginning with Sheshbazzar and continuing with Jeshua and Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others, the total number given in the list (42,360 plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 servants) is impossibly high.¹⁴ A look at the numbers of Judeans in Babylon will show why. Rainer Albertz has calculated the number of exiles taken to Babylon at 20,000, based on 2 Kgs 24:14, 17.¹⁵ Accepting

13. M. D. Knowles (“Pilgrimage Imagery in the Returns in Ezra,” *JBL* 123 [2004] 57–69) argues that Ezra 2 contains imagery of a pilgrimage, emphasizing Jerusalem as the destination of the journey (not the larger area of Judah), that it is explicitly cultic, and is but the first of several such journeys.

14. Contra Rudolph (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, XXIII), who wants to accept the list as authentic from 537; also contra J. Becker (*Ezra/Nehemiah* [NEchtB; Würzburg: Echter, 1990] 24), who calls the number “realistic.” A much more “realistic” number appears in 1 Chr 9:2–22, which set it at 3,618, less than a tenth of the total given in Ezra 2:64 // Neh 7:66. Even less realistic is the suggestion by M. Avi-Yonah (*The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquest* [536 B.C.–A.D. 640]: *A Historical Geography*. [rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977] 220), who thinks the list counted adult males only. He calculates a total population of 250,000.

15. R. Albertz, *Die Exilszeit: 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Biblische Enzyklopädie 7; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001) 80. He adds the two figures (10,00 and 8,000) mentioned in the verses and suggests they included men and women. Jer 52:28–

Table 1. People Listed in Ezra 2:1–3:1 and Nehemiah 7:6–72[73]

<i>Ezra 2:1–3:1</i>	<i>Nehemiah 7:6–72[73]</i>
2:1–2a: introduction “These were the people . . . who came from . . . Babylon . . . with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah. . .”	7:6–7a: introduction “These were the people . . . who came from . . . Babylon . . . with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah. . .”
2:2b–58: census numbers	7:7b–60: census numbers
2:59–60: laity who failed to prove that they belonged to Israel	7:61–62: laity who failed to prove that they belonged to Israel
2:61–63: priests who failed to prove their ancestry	7:63–65: priests who failed to prove their ancestry
2:64–67: totals in the census	7:66–68[69]: totals in the census
2:68–69: gifts for the temple	7:69–71[70–72]: gifts for the work
2:70: priests and all others who lived in the towns	7:72a[73a]: priests and all others lived in the towns
3:1: conclusion “When the seventh month drew near, and the sons of Israel were in their towns, the people assembled as one man at Jerusalem for the festival of booths.”	7:72b[73b]: conclusion “When the seventh month drew near, and the sons of Israel were in their towns, (8:1) <i>all</i> the people assembled as one man at the square before the Water Gate for the reading of the law by Ezra.”

Albertz’s estimate, however, the entire exilic population is not likely to have grown to nearly 50,000 between 597/586 and 520. Furthermore, many exiles chose not to return and remained in Babylon, so the number available to return was larger than the number of those who decided to do so.

Another line of reasoning leads to a similar conclusion. Some modern population estimates for Judah suggest there were no more than 20,000 inhabitants in 520.¹⁶ Minimalist estimates put the population of

30 mentions three deportations totaling 4,600, *perhaps* to be taken to mean males only. The passage could be taken as a comprehensive count derived from a different source than the one employed in 2 Kings.

16. J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 365.

Judah even lower, at approximately 13,350 in Persian I period (538–450) and 20,650 in Persian II (450–332).¹⁷ Regardless of which of these estimates— if either—is correct, the archeological record simply does not reflect the changes that such an influx would have brought about.¹⁸ It is clear that the population did not grow from immigration by nearly 50,000 people at any one time *or* throughout the entire Persian period. Indeed, one can scarcely imagine the stress on land, roads, villages, and so on that an infusion of this many immigrants would cause. Hence, this single “return” in such numbers must be seen as the creation of the redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah out of material at his disposal.¹⁹

Turning to look at the leaders of this fictive single return, one finds several names unknown outside these lists: Reeliah (Ezra 2:2) // Raamiah (Neh 7:7), Nahanani (Neh 7:7), Bilshan (Ezra 2:2 and Neh 7:7),

17. C. E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 201. This essay will return to this and other estimates later.

18. E. A. Knauf, “Bethel: The Israelite Impact on Judean Language and Literature,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 291–350, esp. p. 300. B. Becking (“‘We All Returned as One!’ Critical Notes on the Myth of the Mass Return,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* [ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, IN, 2006] 3–18, esp. pp. 9–10) argues that archaeological remains suggest the following: (1) a decrease in the population of Judah between the late monarchic period and the Babylonian period, with a concentration in the area of Bethel-Mizpah; (2) a clear cultural continuity between the Neo-Babylonian and Persian I periods, implying that the land was not “empty” during the Neo-Babylonian period; (3) a total population of Yehud in the early Persian period far smaller than the nearly 50,000 returnees reported in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7, with a maximum of 4,000 returnees; (4) a series of migrations, not just one; (5) an increase in population during the Persian II period, but still in the vicinity of only 20,000. O. Lipschits (“Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* [ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006] 19–52, esp. p. 32) says flatly: “There is no longer any room for theories regarding a ‘mass return’ at the beginning of the Persian period.” He also doubts (p. 33 n. 46) that the list is cumulative, including returnees from several waves—though he thinks (p. 32) there were at least three main waves: at the beginning of the Persian period and headed by Sheshbazzar, in the first days of Darius and headed by Zerubbabel; and in the days of Artaxerxes I.

19. Becking (“‘We All Returned as One!’” 6–7) speaks of the Myth of the Mass Return. The term *myth* carries so many meanings, however, that it does not commend itself. The account does seem to have played a constitutive role in the mind of the redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah.

and Mispar (Ezra 2:2) // Mispareth (Neh 7:7). Other leaders are mentioned elsewhere in Ezra–Nehemiah. The pair Seriah (Ezra 2:2) and Azariah (Neh 7:7) are son and father, respectively, and are said to have returned with Ezra (Ezra 7:1). Azariah appeared also in the list of those who helped repair the wall (Neh 3:23–24). Baanah (Ezra 2:2 // Neh 7:7) appears elsewhere: in the list of those who signed a covenant not to take foreign wives but to tithe and so on (Neh 10:25) and in the list of priests and Levites who came up with Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Neh 12:3; cf. Rehum and Bigvai).

Still other names appear outside Ezra–Nehemiah but seem to belong to different people; for example, the name Baanah appears also in texts dealing with earlier periods. Similarly, a man named Mordecai appears in both (Ezra 2:2 and Neh 7:7). The only other person with that name in the OT was the cousin of Esther, again, a different person.

Next, the name Rehum appears in the list in Ezra (2:2), but not in Nehemiah, where (Neh 7:7) it is replaced by the name Nehum. The change to Nehum apparently was simply an error, because the name Rehum appeared in the list of priests who came up with Zerubbabel and Joshua in Neh 12:3. In Neh 10:25, he appeared as another person, signing the covenant not to take foreign wives. The name *Rehum* also appears in the Aramaic narrative in Ezra as the name of a royal deputy located in Samaria (Ezra 4:8, 9, 17, 23) during the reign of Artaxerxes I. Apparently, these were two different men by the same name who were contemporaries. Finally, Bigvai (Ezra 2:2 // Neh 7:7) also appeared in Ezra 2:14 // Neh 7:19, in Ezra 8:14 in a list of those who returned with Ezra, and in Neh 10:16 among those signing the covenant. The name might have been Persian, not Babylonian, as one would expect if the list were from the 6th century. Also, if—as is sometimes suggested—he is the same as the man Bagohi or Bagoas, he was the governor of Judah to whom Jews in Elephantine wrote a letter in 408 requesting assistance in rebuilding their temple and from whom they received an answer.²⁰

The significant point about these names, however, is that several belong to the period of Nehemiah. Hence, the “Nehemiah” listed third in both books could have been Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and Blenkinsopp suggests that the “Azaria” listed fourth in Neh 7:7 may have been Ezra because Azaria is an alternate form of the name Ezra. Blenkinsopp concludes that all the names were possibly those of prominent leaders

20. A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.E.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923) no. 30, line 1 // no. 31, line 1 and no. 32, line 1; Eng. translation, pp. 114, 121; H. L. Ginsberg, trans., “Aramaic Letters,” *ANET*, 491–92, esp. p. 492.

drawn from various periods.²¹ Regardless, the introductory list points to a time of origination *no earlier* than the careers of Ezra and Nehemiah.²²

Ezra 2:64–67 // Nehemiah 7:66–68[69]

Jumping ahead to the totals at the end of the list, one notes that the census numbers given in Ezra 2:2b–58 // Neh 7:7b–60 do not add up to the total given here: 42,360 plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 singers, a fact mentioned by many commentators. Indeed, the numbers in the list differ from book to book: 29,818 in Ezra 2 and 31,099 in Nehemiah 7, either of which is still too large for a group returning in 521. Given these discrepancies, the first inference to draw about the total (42,360 + 7,337 + 240/5) is that the verses containing them probably came from a different hand from the one that prepared the list by fathers' houses. The redactor nevertheless used both the list of repatriates and a total that did not match. Who then is included in this total, which he designates "the whole assembly" (כל־הקהל)?

The word קהל is used nine times in Ezra–Nehemiah outside its mention in Ezra 2:64 // Neh 7:66. The most informative place is in Ezra 10. In v. 1, "a very great assembly" of men, women, and all who could understand (older children?) gathered before Ezra, while he was confessing and doing penance. Nothing is said here that limits this assembly to the repatriates. The upshot, however, is that the people confess that they have broken faith with God by marrying "foreign women." Ezra then withdrew from the people. Nothing is said about the people dispersing, but this might be implied by the context. The next day, at any rate, Ezra called for the "sons of the Golah" to (re?)assemble in Jerusalem within three days (10:7) on penalty of banishment from the "assembly of the Golah" if they refused (10:8). At the appointed time, "all the people of Judah and Benjamin" gathered and admitted to extensive intermarriage. This entire assembly agreed (10:12) to Ezra's demand for divorce (10:10), stipulating that officials serve "the whole assembly" as judges in the divorce proceedings.

This narrative may single out the assembly of the repatriates (or Golah) from the larger assembly (which included "foreign women"), with the larger assembly participating in the meeting to which Ezra sum-

21. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1988) 85.

22. Batten (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 73) offers the attractive but unprovable suggestion that the leaders named at the head of the lists were the names of people who led groups of returnees over a period of time.

moned the repatriates. Even if, however, this is not the case and the groups were the same, the point of Ezra's calling the repatriates was to enforce a physical separation between Judeans and foreigners (whom the narrator considered non-Israelites) as a means to ensuring ethnic and cultic purity (compare the reference to "holy seed" in Ezra 9:2).²³

In Nehemiah, the distinction between the Golah and the entire population reappears. In 5:13, "the whole assembly" agrees to Nehemiah's verdict about the restoration of property taken from those who had worked on the wall of Jerusalem. In 8:2, the assembly again consists of "men and women and all who could hear with understanding" (cf. Ezra 10:1). They gathered for Ezra's reading of the law. Things are different, however, in Neh 8:17. There, the author specifically states that "the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity" (כל־הקהל השבים מן־השבי) kept the Feast of Booths. Finally, one more meaning of קהל appears in 13:1. That verse alludes to Deut 23:3, which says that no Ammonite or Moabite should enter the assembly of God, taken in Neh 13:1 to refer to the community worshipping at the temple.

The conclusion from this brief overview of the term קהל in Ezra-Nehemiah is that the phrase "the whole assembly" in Ezra 2:64 // Neh 7:66 referred to all peoples dwelling in Judah and nearby towns in Benjamin. Of them only 29,818/31,099 were numbered by fathers' houses or towns. The implication is that the rest did *not* belong to the true Israel.²⁴

Ezra 2:59–63 // Nehemiah 7:61–65

Even among the repatriates, however, some families (numbering 652 in Ezra 2:60 [cf. 1 Esd 5:36–40] and 642 in Neh 7:62), including both laity and priests, were questionable because they could not prove they belonged to one of the fathers' houses that developed in the Exile.²⁵

23. D. Janzen, "The Cries of Jerusalem: Ethnic, Cultic, Legal, and Geographic Boundaries in Ezra-Nehemiah," *The Disunity of the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah* (ed. M. J. Boda and P. L. Redditt; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008) 117–35.

24. Janzen ("The Cries of Jerusalem") notes the expression "the children of Israel; the priests and the Levites, and the remnant of the children of the exile" were the same as those who celebrated the Passover in Ezra 6:19–22, and the only ones belonging to "true" Israel. Similarly, he notes that the "Yehudim" of Neh 1:2 "are not simply inhabitants of Yehud, but are specifically those who remained from the captivity. This limiting of "true Israel" is a consistent theme in Ezra-Nehemiah.

25. A father's house is understood here as a real or fictive group of exiles organized in Babylon to sustain themselves in their own culture. (See Albertz,

The narrative describing their deficiency (Ezra 2:59–63 // Neh 7:61–65) may have been original to the list of returnees (Ezra 2:2b–58 // Neh 7:8–60) that precedes them, or it may have derived from a different source separate from the other two.

O. Lipschits provides the evidence to determine which alternative is preferable. He has shown that the difference between Ezra 2:60 and Neh 7:62 concerning the total number of people who could not prove their ancestry (652 versus 642, respectively) is deliberate. He does so by comparing Nehemiah 7 and 11. He notes that the total number of settlers in Jerusalem listed by families in 11:3–18 is 3,044. That number is said to have been one-tenth of “the people” (11:1). Further, the totals of the various families in Nehemiah 7 add up to 31,089, and the number of people who could not prove their ancestry is 642, according to Neh 7:62. In Ezra 2:60 and 1 Esd 5:37, however, that number is 652. Because Ezra and 1 Esdras agree, it was not the number in Ezra that changed, but the number in Nehemiah.²⁶ Continuing, if one subtracts 642 from 31,089, the result is 30,447, one-tenth of which is 3,044.²⁷ This means that the redactor of (Ezra–)Nehemiah modified the number who could not prove their ancestry to make Nehemiah 7 and 11 jibe. So, he inherited a list with an attached narrative which showed that even though those people belonged to the Golah, they could not prove their descent and, thus, did not belong to the true Israel either.

Ezra 2:20–35 // Nehemiah 7:25–38

The question still may be raised whether the verses just discussed fully exhaust the redactor’s reduction of the whole community to the

Die Exilzeit, 92. For more on fathers’ houses, see J. P. Weinberg, “Das Bēit ’abōt im 6.-4. Jh. V. u. Z.” *VT* 23 [1973] 400–414.)

26. This comment reflects my opinion that 1 Esdras is later than Ezra–Nehemiah, a position argued cogently and succinctly by Batten (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 6–13), Rudolph (*Esra und Nehemiah*, iv–xix, esp. xv), and Williamson (*Esra, Nehemiah*, pp. xxii–xxiii) among a host of other scholars. For the opposite opinion, see K.-F. Pohlmann, *Studien zum dritten Esra* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970). Taking a mediating stance L. L. Grabbe (*Ezra–Nehemiah* [Old Testament Readings; London, New York: Routledge, 1998] 109–15) thinks the parallels suggest “that 1 Esdras represents in some fashion an earlier stage of the Zerubbabel-Joshua and the Ezra traditions from which the compiler of the Hebrew Ezra–Nehemiah drew. However, it seems to me that 1 Esdras was not the specific source used but itself is also a development of that source” (p. 115). If so, the hypothesized original text is lost, and Ezra–Nehemiah is the earliest extant version.

27. O. Lipschits, “Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11,” *JBL* 121 (2002) 432 n. 38.

“true Israel.” The main list numbers the laity either by their fathers’ house (Ezra 2:2b–19 // Neh 7:8–24) *or* by their town (most of Ezra 2:20–35 // Neh 7:25–38) arranged by proximity to Jerusalem, while enumerating the priests only by genealogy (Ezra 2:36–39, 61–63 // Neh 7:39–42, 63–65). Though nothing is said explicitly that casts an aspersion on those families listed only by town, Jonathan E. Dyck thinks that their inability to name their “father’s house” marked them.²⁸ Perhaps their ethnic/cultic purity was suspect too. The list serves not so much to justify their legitimacy as to reflect the social practices of the deeply divided community in Yehud. Differently stated, listing “returnees” by place names allowed the original compiler of the list (as opposed to the redactor of Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 to include people who had actually remained behind. My suggestion is that the redactor of Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 might *not* have wanted to include those people, who numbered 8,635 in Ezra 2:20–35, 8,684 in Neh 7:25–38.

Whatever the source(s) of his lists, however, the redactor, having issued the caveats that not all Judeans belonged to the Golah and that not all the “Golah” were certifiably Judean, added the number of the total population ($42,360 + 7,337 + 240/5$) to his narrative about the return of the Golah to Judah.²⁹ For him, the total population of postexilic Yehud numbered nearly 50,000, of whom only about 60% belonged to the Golah. If those who could not prove their genealogy are excluded, the number that belonged falls to only 21,183 of 49,942 in Ezra or 22,415 of 49,942 in Nehemiah, or slightly more than 40%. Either way, the remaining members of the population did not belong to the “true Israel.” This distinction between the “true Israel” and the rest of the inhabitants of Judah was crucial to the redactor, so much so that he twice reported the numbers that made his point.³⁰

Ezra 2:36–58 // Nehemiah 7:39–60

The first four verses of Ezra 2:36–58 // Neh 7:39–60 (Ezra 2:36–39 //

28. J. E. Dyck, “Ezra 2 in Ideological Perspective,” *Rethinking Contexts, Re-reading Texts* (ed. M. D. Carroll Rodas; JSOTSup 299; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 141.

29. It should be noted that J. A. Bewer (*Der Text des Buches Ezra* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922] 33) suggested an emendation that required only one change and reduced the number 42,360 to 32,360. Few scholars, however, have seen fit to follow Bewer.

30. The emphasis on the significance of the total of $42,360 + 7,337 + 240/5$ in this article stands at great variance from the assessment by K. Galling (“The ‘Gōlā’List’ according to Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7,” *JBL* 70 [1951] 152) that the total was simply “the playful addition of a later historian.”

Neh 7:39–42) list only four priestly fathers' houses: Jedaia, Immer, Pashhur, and Senaah. By contrast, 1 Chr 24:7–19 lists 24 orders of priests, an arrangement Williamson thinks arose by the late Persian period and was later than the simpler arrangement in Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7.³¹ If previous parts of the census list came from the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ezra 2:36–39 // Neh 7:39–42 may have also. The following verses (Ezra 2:40–42 // Neh 7:43–45) record a comparatively small number of Levites, a situation also reflected in the narrative of Ezra's return to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:15–20). With regard to the gate keepers, their number increases between Ezra 2:42 // Neh 7:45 (138) and Neh 11:19 (172).

Ezra 2:68–69 // Nehemiah 7:69–71[70–72]

Moving finally to the end of the narrative, one notes that the redactor concluded his account by mentioning the number of the contributions the people brought to Jerusalem. In Ezra 2, of course, the work in question was the repair of the temple, and the first act of the heads of house was to turn over the money for the work on the temple. In Nehemiah 7, however, the nature of the work is unspecified in these verses. Judging by the lists, the gifts were for the temple, but their purpose in Nehemiah 7 remains vague. A glance at the two lists side by side will show how much they vary from each other.

Ezra 2:68–69

And some of the heads of the fathers' [houses], when they arrived at the house of God which is in Jerusalem, made freewill offerings for the house of God to erect it upon its site; they gave according to their ability to the treasury of the work 61,000 darics of gold, 5000 minas of silver, and 100 priests' tunics.

Nehemiah 7:69–71

And some of the heads of the fathers' [houses], gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 fifty bowls, 530 priests' tunics. And some of the heads of the fathers' [houses] gave to the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold, 2,200 minas of silver. And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, and 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' tunics.

31. H. G. M. Williamson, "The Origins of the Twenty-Four Priestly Courses," *VT* 30 (1979) 251–68. The date is partly secured by the fact that in Ezra 2:36–58 // Neh 7:39–60 the priests are not called "sons of Aaron," a self-designation that appears in Leviticus, Numbers, and Chronicles; cf. "house of Aaron" in Ps 115:9–11[10–12], 118:3, 135:19.

Two impressions stand out. The first is that the redactor possessed at least three short lists of contributions to the temple, which he worked into his narrative in Neh 7:69–71 (compare the threefold mention of priests' tunics). The second is that the connection of Neh 7:69–71[70–72] to its context appears looser than that of Ezra 2:68–69. That impression is not surprising, however, if the redactor had receipts of contributions to the temple that he was using to make the transition to his narrative in Nehemiah. The apparent better fit of Ezra 2:68–69, however, does not constitute evidence that Ezra 2 is primary and Nehemiah 7 is secondary because the narrative sits loosely in its context in Ezra also. Rather, both chapters are the constructs of the redactor.

Transitions between Accounts

The redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah “tweaked” the beginnings and ends of his account of the return of the Golah to fit it into its two different positions. The prequel for the list in Ezra 2 is the redactor’s narrative in Ezra 1 of the so-called “Edict of Cyrus” that allowed exiles to return home and rebuild the temple. In Nehemiah, however, the redactor introduced the list with the explanation that Nehemiah “found” the book of the genealogy of those who were the first to return from Babylon (Neh 7:5). This is pretty clear evidence that the list was the same originally in both places. (The differences in family names and numbers between Ezra 2:3–58 and Neh 7:7–60 probably are due to the accidents of transmission, as is widely suggested.)

At the end of the list in both places, the redactor again shaped the narrative to fit its different contexts. First, he reported the delivery of the gifts. In Ezra, he reported that upon arrival in Jerusalem some of the heads of the families went to the house of God to make freewill contribution toward its erection (Ezra 2:68).³² In Nehemiah, by contrast, he simply said they contributed “to the work,” which was unspecified (Neh 7:69[70]).³³ Moreover, the size and type of the contributions differed. Second, in both chapters (Ezra 2:70, Neh 7:72[73]) the redactor said that the priests, the Levites, some of the people, the gatekeepers,

32. It is possible that the redactor has made a slip of the pen here in saying that they went to the house of God, implying that it was already standing. See Batten, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 72. That is not a necessary implication, however, because he might have meant the site rather than the building. Besides, the altar was used during the Exile (cf. Zech 7:3).

33. The most obvious “work” was the restoration of the wall, though its completion was narrated in Nehemiah 6.

singers, temple servants and “all Israel” lived in their own towns.³⁴ The following narratives (about Jeshua and Zerubbabel in Ezra 3 and Ezra’s reading the law in Nehemiah 8) both are situated in the “seventh month” and take place in Jerusalem; hence, Ezra 2:70 // Neh 7:72a[73a] have the people settle at once, but not in Jerusalem. The redactor’s view is that few people lived there until Nehemiah completed his work (cf. Neh 11:1–2).

The descriptions of what the people did “when the seventh month came” are separate from the census list. In Ezra 3, they observed the festival of booths, which they also did in Neh 8:9–18, possibly the original ending of the narrative in Nehemiah 7. As the text of Nehemiah stands, however, the narrative of Ezra’s reading the law of Moses to the people (Neh 8:1b–8) interrupts the connection between Neh 8:1a and 8:9–18, and the introduction of Ezra in Neh 8:9 marks another seam in the process of introducing Ezra into the Nehemiah account.³⁵

The Function of Each Section

What function did each section of Ezra 2 // Nehemiah 7 play? The opening in Ezra 2:1–2a // Neh 7:6–7a introduces the lists that follow as a record of those who moved from Babylon to Judah before the rebuilding of the temple. In the case of Ezra 2, the list seems to continue the narrative in Ezra 1, except that in 2:1–2a Sheshbazzar disappears and Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and *Nehemiah* appear. Clearly, the redactor wrote those two verses to introduce the list. In the case of Nehemiah 7, however, v. 4 formed the background for the narrative in Neh 11:1–2 (about the drafting of people to live there) or Neh 12:27–43 (the conclusion of the narrative about rebuilding the wall), while Neh 7:5 explains how the list of repatriates came into the hands of Nehemiah for his use. The list is clearly redactional in both Ezra and Nehemiah, and the redactor emphasizes that the same list was used in both cases.

The function of the census list in both contexts (Ezra 2:3–58 // Neh 7:7b–60 or just Ezra 2:3–35 // Neh 7:7b–38) was to show which families belonged to the “real” laity and which to the “real” priesthood. By con-

34. The NRSV adds “in Jerusalem and its vicinity” to Ezra 2:70 on the basis of 1 Esd 5:58. Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah*, 94) concurs. The MT does not have the phrase in either Ezra 2 or Nehemiah 7.

35. The combined narrative in Neh 8:1b–18 actually anticipates and lays the groundwork for Neh 13:1–3, a redactional piece designed to introduce the account from Nehemiah’s second stay in Jerusalem found in Neh 13:4–31. That whole account included Neh 8:1b–18, a narrative in Neh 11:1–2 and a list in Neh 11:3–36, plus 13:1–3, written by the redactor, plus 13:4–31.

trast, the function of Ezra 2:59–63 // Neh 7:61–65 was to point out the presence of laity (Ezra 2:59–60 // Neh 7:61–62) and priests (Ezra 2:61–63 // Neh 7:63–65), even among the Golah who could not pass muster genealogically, with the further result that the priests would not be allowed to offer sacrifices. The mention of Tobiah (Ezra 2:60 // Neh 7:62) anticipates and sets up the conflict between Nehemiah and Eliashib,³⁶ a relative of Tobiah, and the one who provided Tobiah a room in the temple in Nehemiah 13.

The function of Ezra 2:64–67 // Neh 7:66–69 was to signal that the postexilic community included a substantial percentage of people who did not belong to the “true community” or “true priesthood.” The function of the lists of contributions was to draw each narrative toward its own conclusion, which the redactor achieved in Ezra 2:70 // Neh 7:72a[73a]. Ezra 3:1 // Neh 7:72b[73b] began the next narrative.

Summary: The Work of the Redactor

The redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah had at his disposal a list, now found in Ezra 2:2b–58 // Neh 7:7b–60, that included the number of inhabitants of Yehud arranged by fathers’ houses or location. He also employed the total of some kind of census numbering 42,360 members of the assembly plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 singers and, finally, at least three short notes about contribution to the temple. The redactor wrote Ezra 2:1–2a // Neh 7:6–7a to connect the census list to Ezra 1, thereby turning the list (Ezra 2:2b–58 // Neh 7:7b–60) into a document from 539 or 521. He also changed the number 652 to 642 in Neh 7:62 and used the three notes about gifts to the temple to pen a conclusion to the list appropriate to each context in Ezra 2:64–3:1 // Neh 7:66–73.

Conclusion and Implications

This essay has argued that the discrepancy between the total number of returnees in Ezra 2:64–67 // Neh 7:66–69 (42,360 members of the assembly plus 7,337 servants and 240/5 singers) and the totals of those numbered in Ezra 2:2b–63 // Neh 7:7b–65 (minus those who could not

36. Williamson (*Ezra, Nehemiah*, 386) rejects the proposed identification between this Eliashib and the high priest by the same name mentioned in Neh 3:1, 20, on the grounds that he is not called “high priest” in this verse. Still, he is called “a priest” in Neh 13:4, and a short list of high priests (without the title) appears in the preceding chapter (Neh 12:10–11). Regardless of whether he was the “high priest,” Ezra 2:60 // Neh 7:62 and Neh 12:10–11 supply in advance grounds for Nehemiah’s behavior in Neh 13:4–9.

prove their ancestry) is one way the redactor substantiated that not everyone in the postexilic community belonged to “true Israel.” Differently stated, the redactor rejects the “total Israel” (42,360+) in favor of a smaller Israel he imagines. This Israel, not all the inhabitants of Yehud, constituted those responsible for the building of the temple and the restoring of the wall, two crucial events in the restoration for the redactor of Ezra–Nehemiah.³⁷

A possible objection to that thesis is that it is too subtle, requiring the reader to add up the numbers and draw the correct inference. One must ask, however, what counts as “subtle,” let alone “too subtle”? After all, the numbers were laboriously listed for each father’s house or town and the total of the “whole assembly” plainly stated—in both Ezra and Nehemiah. The redactor appears to have been some kind of scribe, and lists, receipts, and numbers stand at the heart of the work of scribes. Nor has the discrepancy in the numbers gone unnoticed by readers through the years. It is only the significance of the discrepancy that needed to be inferred.

Does the number $42,360 + 7,337 + 240/5$ represent an accurate census tally for the Persian period II? Presumably, accuracy is never irrelevant, but it is always only an ideal. Even modern governments have a difficult time assuring accuracy in their census counts. Accuracy would have been impossible in ancient Israel, where population figures could be unrealistically high. Josephus (*Ag. Ap.* I, 22, 197) cited Hecataeus that the population of Jerusalem was about 120,000 not long after the death of Alexander the Great. A more sober, modern estimate is 30,000 as late as 140 B.C.E., and then only after a rapid, fivefold expansion under the Hasmoneans.³⁸ Accuracy evidently is in the eye of the beholder.

The redactor’s figures, by contrast, do not appear severely exaggerated, if at all. Moreover, he worked with exact as opposed to round numbers, that is, 2,172 sons of Parosh, not 2,000, and a total of 42,360 members of the congregation, not 40,000. These numbers suggest that he was working with someone’s census figures, not making them up. Certainly, they are not as fanciful as those of the Priestly Code in the Pentateuch, another literary product from the Persian period. It employed greatly exaggerated counts for the time of the exodus, Num 2:32 claiming that the Israelites in the wilderness numbered 603,550 “by their ancestral houses.” The numbers in those chapters prove that

37. Cf. Janzen, “The Cries of Jerusalem.”

38. N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983) 64–81.

Judean audiences from the Persian period did not require the kind of accuracy modern readers might expect.

The redactor's figure for the total population of Yehud is not much more than double Carter's estimate of 20,600 for the Persian period II,³⁹ but Carter's figures themselves are based on his delineation of Yehud, which might have been different from that of the list employed by the redactor.⁴⁰ Lipschits puts the population at 30,000 during the Persian period.⁴¹ Ernst Axel Knauf thinks a population of 49,897/2 lies within the margin of error one should allow for Lipschits's estimate.⁴² One need only remember that error may have affected the biblical number as well as modern estimates.

The date for the total population figure, if indeed the line of reasoning offered in this essay is correct, probably was near the time of the redaction of Ezra–Nehemiah. The best evidence for the date of Ezra–Nehemiah is the presence in Neh 12:10–11 of the names of the high priests from Jeshua to Jaddua. The list cannot have been compiled before the career of Jaddua and does not mention his successor. None after Eliashib (high priest during the career of Nehemiah) appeared elsewhere in the book. Hence, it seems reasonable to infer that the list dated from the lifetime of the last mentioned High Priest Jaddua. His father, Jonathan, was high priest in Jerusalem in 410, when Yedoniah and the other priests in Elephantine wrote to Bagoas, governor of Jerusalem, requesting his aid in securing permission to rebuild their temple

39. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud*, 201.

40. See the warning by J. L. Berquist, "Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 53–66, esp. p. 53. Carter's boundaries, in fact, differ from those proposed by Lipschits and by E. Stern. See the delineation by J. W. Wright, "Remapping Yehud: The Borders of Yehud and the Genealogies of Chronicles," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006) 67–90, esp. pp. 67–70.

41. O. Lipschits, "Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and Fifth Centuries B.C.E.," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. O. Lipschits and J. Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 323–76. G. Knoppers ("Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* [ed. O. Lipschits and M. Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006] 265–90, esp. p. 272) points out that A. Zertal's population estimate of 42,000 for Persian-period Mt. Manasseh implies a larger population still for the northern region as a whole.

42. Knauf, "Israelite Impact," 300.

in Egypt.⁴³ The actual dates of Jaddua's term are not clear, but Josephus (*Ant.* 11:8.4 §§325–26) mentioned that Jaddua met Alexander the Great when he came to Jerusalem. There are problems with Josephus's account, but assuming its basic accuracy, Jaddua was high priest into the early days of the Greek period. If the list in Nehemiah 12 arose during his tenure, it would date from 350 B.C.E. $\pm$ 30 years.⁴⁴ Perhaps Ezra–Nehemiah as a whole dates from that period too.⁴⁵ A late Persian date for the book fits well with the overall view of the census list taken here: that is, that it was a presentation of a fictive single return combining lists from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah at the earliest, records of gifts to the temple, and a total population that was possibly from a still-later date, all of which was designed to read the redactor's own agenda about the "true Israel" back into the early days of the restoration.

43. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, no. 30, line 1 // no. 31, line 1 and no. 32, line 1; Engl\, translation pp. 114, 121; Ginsberg, "Aramaic Letters," 492.

44. S. Japhet ("Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel," ZAW 94 [1982] 89 n. 35), working with Cross's list, argued for a date in the earliest part of that range, i.e., in the first quarter of the 4th century.

45. Kellermann (*Nehemia*, 99) argues that the redactor worked earlier and the census list was interpolated into Ezra–Nehemiah in the third or second century. That view does not seem convincing because the list introduces Jeshua and Zerubbabel, who play an important role in Ezra 3, and Neh 11:1–2 presupposes the list (at least Neh 7:7–65) as well. In other words, the list is crucial to the basic plot of Ezra–Nehemiah.

Nehemiah's Request on Behalf of Jerusalem

JOSEPH FLEISHMAN

Introduction

After hearing reliable information from Hanani and other men who had come from Judah regarding the gravely deteriorated state of Jerusalem¹ in Nehemiah 1 and 2, Nehemiah determined to act on behalf of the city. His decision to undertake a journey to Jerusalem constituted a national and religious challenge² and was motivated by a fervent sense of mission that burned deep in his soul. The decision required a lot

Author's note: I would like to express my gratitude to Professors Isaac Kalimi, Paul L. Redditt, and E. H. Gerstenberger who read the manuscript of this essay and contributed valuable comments and improvements.

1. The wall of Jerusalem lay in ruins after its destruction by the Babylonians during Nebuchadnezzar's reign. See W. Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemiah* (Tubingen: Mohr Seibek, 1949) 103; H. L. Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) 105; F. C. Fensham, *The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 155. E. M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) 270. A. T. Olmstead (*History of the Persian Empire* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948] 313–15) claims that following Magabazius's rebellion Jewish extremism increased, and "hotheads," in his words, began rebuilding the wall against Ezra's better advice to obey the law. The reaction of the Jews' enemies was not long in coming. According to J. Blenkinsopp (*Ezra–Nehemiah* [London: Westminster, 1988] 203–4, 207), undefined difficulties caused the wall to lie in ruins.

Regarding the identity of Hanani and the men from Judah, see Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, 105; J. M. Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (AB 14; New York: Doubleday, 1965) 94; Fensham, *The Book of Esther and Nehemiah*, 151.

2. Cf. Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemiah*, 102; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 205; 37; J. Wiesehofer, *Ancient Persia from 550 B.C. to 650 A.D.* (London: Tauris, 1996); Olmstead, *History*, 314. Regarding the identity of Hanani and the men from Judah, see Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, 105; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 94; Fensham, *The Book of Esther and Nehemiah*, 151.

of courage not only because of the difficulty of the mission and the formidable challenge of rebuilding the city wall but principally because he had to ask King Artaxerxes I³ to allow him to rebuild “the city of the graveyard of my ancestors,” that is, Jerusalem. It was Artaxerxes who for political and imperial reasons had forbidden the Jews to continue rebuilding the city wall of Jerusalem, “that rebellious and wicked city” (Ezra 4:12).⁴ A request such as this was therefore risky and could immediately have aroused the king’s suspicion that his authority was being undermined; it could even have been interpreted as a provocation against him, leading to a situation fraught with danger. Nehemiah describes the scene at the time of the request, expresses his thoughts, and reveals what he was granted:

The aim of this essay is to focus on Nehemiah’s plans and activities to convince King Artaxerxes to relieve him of his highly honorable function as the king’s cup bearer⁵ and allow him to travel to Jerusalem in order to restore the city and rebuild its wall. It will be shown that, in line with his character, which was to be both mindful and practical, Nehemiah planned very carefully both the timing and the formulation of his request. The tactics and the rhetoric he used at the meeting with the king were critical in achieving the desired results. Although Nehemiah’s moves may be understood to a large extent on their own merit, reading Neh 2:1–9 with Zoroastrian principles in mind, principles that Nehemiah emphasized before the king, will help us understand the complexity of the literal meaning of Scripture in our discussion of this topic and will enable us to sound the depths of Nehemiah’s request.

What strategy did Nehemiah devise to achieve his goal? The narrator does not say, so Nehemiah’s request and course of action must be analyzed in the context of personal and interpersonal relationships, as

3. For the identification of this king as Artaxerxes I, see M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden: Brill, 1982) 182, 189; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 205; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 242–48.

4. Many investigators believe that the king who issued the decree to cease building the wall was Artaxerxes I, and not Artaxerxes II. See for example, Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemiah*, 103; Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, 105; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 99; Fensham, *The Book of Esther and Nehemiah*, 155, 160; G. Widengren, *The Persian Period* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 528.

5. Although Nehemiah is called the *משקֶה לַמֶּלֶךְ*, “king’s cup bearer,” (1:11), ancient translations such as the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Peshita (in situ) imply that Nehemiah was the chief cup bearer. Modern scholars also hold the same view. See, for example, H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, (WBC 16; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) 174; and Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 212.

well as in the context of religious and political factors. It is worthwhile to examine the interaction that took place between Nehemiah and the king on that occasion as far as its timing and formulation are concerned, as well as the background comments in the biblical text.

***Nehemiah's Calculated Boldness and His Anxiety
vis-à-vis His Relationship with King Artaxerxes***

Nehemiah's boldness in taking a risk by asking King Artaxerxes to allow him to go to Jerusalem and rebuild its walls can be explained within the context of the following considerations. First of all is the policy of the Achaemenian kings. The Achaemenian kings of Persia were inclined to favor petitions made by members of the aristocracy who were loyal to them, whether the members were Persian or of other nationalities. For that purpose, at appointed times they held meetings with people of high social rank.⁶

Second, the Achaemenian kings were generally sympathetic to the Jews. Judah, which was part of the province Beyond the River, was considered very important, especially at the beginning of Artaxerxes' reign.⁷ Apparently, Nehemiah judged that the stability of the province Beyond the River was crucial to the empire and, owing to this perception and his own good relationship with the king, that the king would approve of his presence there.

Third, Nehemiah's status at the royal court was favorable. Nehemiah had retained his Jewish identity and made no attempt to conceal it as it may be assumed by the fact that Artaxerxes was not surprised when he heard Nehemiah's request that he wished to go to Judah—to the city where his forefathers were buried. Also, Nehemiah, who was a devout Jew,⁸ was familiar with the Zoroastrian laws of purity. According to Zoroastrianism (which will also be discussed in greater detail below), those who do not believe in and do not observe the laws of purity defile anything with which they come into contact.⁹

Nehemiah came in direct contact with the king's wine, which he tasted in his capacity as the king's cup bearer, even if he was not the

6. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 37. See also Boyce, *History*, 187; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 149.

7. Boyce, *History*, 188.

8. As is evident from his prayers (e.g., Neh 1:5–11; 2:4) and from his attempts to establish religious law in the state of Judah (Nehemiah 13).

9. See Boyce, *History*, 191–95; A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 414–15.

chief of the cup bearers.¹⁰ From this, we deduce that Nehemiah's observance of his own laws of purity was regarded by the king as meeting the requirements of the office.¹¹ Additionally, the high office required that the man fulfilling the function of cup bearer had to be unquestionably loyal to the king. The king undoubtedly trusted Nehemiah as a most loyal servant and knew how to appreciate his loyalty even knowing that Nehemiah was equally loyal to his own people.¹²

Fourth is Artaxerxes' personality: according to scholars, this king was kind and generous.¹³

Considering all these factors, Nehemiah was able to muster enough courage to turn to the king with his special plea. However, he was also aware that he was endangering his own life and the province of Judah by making such a daring request, so he went about his task with deep anxiety. When the moment of truth arrived, which will be discussed later, and with it the opportunity to press his plea before the king, he said "I was very frightened" (Neh 2:2). Even though he had already engaged the king in conversation, as is evident from his prayers (Neh 1:5–11, 2:4) and from his attempts to establish religious law in the state of Judah (Nehemiah 13), he prayed to the God of Heaven (Neh 2:4). And he was not afraid in vain. He was correct to fear that the king would consider his request as deceptive trickery the goal of which was treason against the king.

We know of a letter alleging a Jewish plot written by administrative chiefs of Samaria, in their own names and in the names of officials that had been appointed to administer Samaria and other areas in the province Beyond the River (Ezra 4:7–23). In this letter, which apparently reached Artaxerxes during the first few years of his reign, the enemies

10. Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 150. It is likely that several cup bearers served the king, and they took turns at doing so. See Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528. Many kings were murdered by treacherous cup bearers; see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 260. The cup bearer at times had additional functions; e.g., Ahikar was the guardian of the seal and responsible for the accounting of the royal house, and only Esarhaddon the king was above him. Tob 1:22; *B. Qam.* 92b.

11. It cannot be claimed that whoever observes Jewish laws of purity would be considered pure by Zoroastrians. For example, according to biblical and Jewish law, water purifies the impure, whereas according to Zoroastrianism water is sacred and it is forbidden to defile it; consequently, before an impure person washes his body, he must purify himself by other means. See Boyce, *History*, 191–95; de Jong, *Traditions*, 414–15.

12. Wieschofer, *Persia*, 37–38; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 212.

13. Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 159–61; Boyce, *History*, 178. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 11:166.

of those Jews that had returned to Zion claimed the Jews were rebuilding the fallen wall of Jerusalem, which in the past had been a "rebellious and wicked city" (4:12). They stressed to the king that once the walls were rebuilt and the city was restored, it would rebel against Persia and would even become a center for inspiring unrest throughout the province. They warned the king that the inevitable result of the restoration would be that Persia would no longer hold sway in the province Beyond the River.

The king could not, and did not, ignore the warning; he checked the history of the city and discovered that, indeed, Jerusalem had a rebellious past (Ezra 4:19). Additionally, according to v. 19 the king learned that Jerusalem had produced powerful kings (for example, David and Solomon) who had ruled over the territory Beyond the River. Since these significant findings accorded with the claims stated in the warning of the letter of accusation, the king feared there would be unrest in that sensitive area of his empire; a restored Jerusalem fortified by walls could very well spark a new insurgency. Therefore, he gave orders to stop the rebuilding of the city wall until a new directive was issued (v. 21).¹⁴ The royal decree to stop construction was not irrevocable, for had it been final it could not have been rescinded later. King Artaxerxes had made it possible to amend his decision.¹⁵

Furthermore, he had also instructed those to whom his reply was addressed not to do anything to harm the Jews of Jerusalem lest they cause further damage to the kingdom's stability (v. 22). The king feared that not only would the people who had made the malicious allegations stop the construction of the wall, but they would also harm the Jewish inhabitants of the city. Such an attack on the inhabitants would destabilize the relatively peaceful region and would have harmful consequences for the kingdom. However, as soon as the people who had leveled the charges against the Jews received the king's missive, they hastened to Jerusalem and forcibly stopped the Jews from working on the wall (v. 23).¹⁶ It seems that those who had leveled the allegations did not carry out the king's orders but inflicted further damage to the city wall.¹⁷

Nehemiah, whose aim was to travel to Jerusalem in order to strengthen the temple and rebuild the city wall, had to allay fears

14. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 99; Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528.

15. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 204.

16. Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemiah*, 103; Brockington, *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*, 105-6; Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 99; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 155; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 102-204.

17. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 49.

regarding his intentions, which could be construed by the king as a threat to the peace and stability of the empire and as instigation to rebellion. It was this suspicion that aroused great anxiety in Nehemiah, and he realized it was a stumbling block that had to be cleared away before the road to Jerusalem could be opened.

Even if he hoped to succeed in convincing the king, and no harm would come to him from that quarter, Nehemiah was anxious about not being able to achieve the purpose close to his heart because he was headed for a dangerous place rife with strife. In that place lived Judah's and Benjamin's foes, who had warned the king against an alleged Jewish rebellion if the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt. Even if the king had been amenable to his request, that did not mean the foes of Jerusalem would change their minds. These fears were borne out by what happened when he arrived in Jerusalem (e.g., Neh 2:10–20) and later on.

Moreover, it may be assumed that following the first meeting, there were additional meetings at which Nehemiah asked for more detailed information about what was happening in Judah and Jerusalem. At these meetings, he discovered that he could also expect internal opposition to his plans. We can assume he was aware of it from the way he described the night walk he took around the wall three days after his arrival in the city in order to survey and assess the damage with his own eyes. Here Nehemiah went out of his way to cover things in a cloak of secrecy (Neh 2:12, 16). Thus, an additional reason for his anxiety stemmed from the fact that there was internal opposition to his plans within the population of the city itself. While he regarded the building of the wall as the most essential and most important step for the restoration of Jerusalem and the surrounding province, he feared the internal opposition that, unlike him, held antiseparatist views.

Essentially, Nehemiah may have petitioned the king on the basis of all the aforementioned factors, but we believe that even these were not sufficient to achieve his purpose because he still had the difficult task of convincing the king of the importance of the journey to Jerusalem and the urgent need not to delay or ignore the matter. Nehemiah used religious insight and political wisdom to achieve his goals. We will first turn to Zoroastrianism to shed some light on the main actors.

The Role of Zoroastrianism in Nehemiah 2

Researchers are divided on whether it is possible to identify the Achaemenian kings of Persia as believers in Zarathustra (Zoroaster in

Greek).¹⁸ Archaeological and epigraphic data on them points, however, to the conclusion that they practiced Zoroastrianism, even if not always exclusively, but syncretistically, and also that they used it to gain the loyalty and trust of important people.¹⁹ Cyrus had already preceded them as a follower of Zarathustra.²⁰ On what is considered to be Darius's grave at Persepolis there is a statue on which Zoroastrian elements can be seen. In addition, Zoroastrian elements can also be seen in writings in Behistun and in other inscriptions attributed to him. Even so, it should be noted that he was tolerant of other religions.²¹ Darius sought to gain public support by proclaiming his belief in this god.²² (Which God? None has been mentioned. Zarathustra = Zoroaster. Ahura Mazda has not been mentioned yet.) King Xerxes was a Zoroastrian too and believed in the divinity of Ahura Mazda; the inscriptions attributed to him praise this deity.²³ Artaxerxes was also a Zoroastrian.²⁴ In the Achaemenid period, Ahura Mazda was considered the patron god of the royal house and was symbolically portrayed as spreading his protective wings over the king.²⁵ We concur with Choksy, who opines that both the Achaemenian kings and the Parthians were basically Zoroastrian.²⁶

This assumption is supported by the findings regarding the way the Achaemenian kings were buried.²⁷ Archaeology at Cyrus's grave and that of other Persian kings reveals that the kings' bodies were first embalmed and then buried. They were not left exposed to be eaten by

18. For a review of the problems and obstacles that hinder a clear resolution of the issue, see, for example, Yamauchi, *Persia*, 319–20; Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 94, 99–101. For a review of the opinions and reasons given by those who rule out the possibility that the Achaemenian kings were Zoroastrian, see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 420–21.

19. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 100–101.

20. M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979) 49.

21. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 54–59; M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1992) 125.

22. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 100–101.

23. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 56.

24. *Ibid.*, 56, 58–59; Boyce, *History*, 178–79; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 421–22; for a different opinion, see the survey in *ibid.*, 419–21.

25. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 67.

26. J. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989) 30.

27. D. Huff, "Archaeological Evidence of Zoroastrian Funerary Practices," in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context* (ed. M. Stausberg; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 618.

wild animals and predatory birds, so that only the bones would be left for burial as was the orthodox Zoroastrian custom, a convention that had become accepted in this period. In spite of their burial practices, however, they apparently observed the sacred values of Zoroastrianism. While the assumption that the Achaemenian kings were Zoroastrian is contradicted by our knowledge of their burial customs, other factors lead to the conclusion that the Achaemenians were indeed Zoroastrian. First, the custom of exposing the bodies of the deceased until the flesh was consumed was by no means universal in the Achaemenian period; it was adopted only gradually, so that it had not yet taken root at that time. Secondly, the Achaemenians did not desecrate or defile the sacred values of Zoroastrianism even in death.²⁸ Specifically, since Zoroastrianism held that the flesh of the dead contaminates the earth, which is holy, the kings were not interred. Rather, they were buried in a sort of house built on an artificial mound of stones that separated the body from the ground.²⁹

A second factor to consider is the Zoroastrian calendar. The meeting between Nehemiah and Hanani and the men who came with him took place in Susa³⁰ during the month of Kislev “in the 20th year,” which in all probability is the 20th year of Artaxerxes I’s reign, and the meeting between Nehemiah and the king also took place in Susa in the month of Nissan in the 20th year of the king’s reign. The Zoroastrian calendar is a modified version of the 360-day Babylonian calendar. The ancient Iranian calendar was also used, but a modified version: various changes were made in it, and Zoroastrian holidays were inserted.³¹

According to the Zoroastrian calendar as far back as the early Achaemenian period, the month of Kislev, parallel to November–December, is the month of fire. During this month, the Persians celebrated the festival of the holy fire of “Sada” 100 days before *no ruz*, “the new day,” celebrated in the spring during the month of Nissan, parallel to March–April.³²

28. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 59; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 396–97.

29. Huff, “Archaeological Evidence,” 615.

30. Persian kings used to vary their places of residence and tour throughout their empire (Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 150; see also Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 38). In the capital Susa the kings had their winter palace; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 205.

31. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 70–74.

32. *Ibid.*, mainly p. 72. Regarding Babylonian influence in this matter, see p. 27.

This important holiday, which is also Zarathustra's birthday, was celebrated on the first night of the new year. It celebrated unity, abolition of social classes, food and joy, a new birth, and hope for light and warmth in all the seasons of the year.³³ Hanani and the men who were with him met Nehemiah in Kislev, but Nehemiah thought it better to hold back and make his request to the king in Nissan, at the important banquet celebrating the festival.

For the Persians, the wine banquet was an important institution for various reasons. Among other things, on these occasions the kings would bestow different favors and material benefits chiefly on the aristocracy and the military.³⁴ Nehemiah, the king's cup bearer who served his master during the important banquet held in Nissan (Neh 1:2), when it was customary to grant the requests of petitioners,³⁵ decided this was the right time to make his request.

Nehemiah, a pragmatic man, did not postpone the meeting for four months in order to offer prayers to God, to fast and mourn, or because he could not have access to the king meanwhile. He considered and examined carefully the nature of the Nissan festival and its celebrations, and only then did he decide when to appear before the king.³⁶

In all probability, custom and the law governing these festivals prevented Nehemiah from making his request prior to the king speaking to him. Apparently, he realized that he had to incite the king to speak to him first, and then his request would flow directly and naturally as part of his reply to the king's question. Nehemiah correctly surmised that the somber appearance of his cup bearer among the happy celebrants at the joyous wine banquet would catch the king's attention; the king would wonder why his cup bearer, of all people, would be walking around as if in mourning.³⁷ As Nehemiah expected, the king said to him, "How is it that you look bad [i.e., sad], though you are not ill?" (Neh 2:2) The obvious though unstated answer is that a person's face is sad when something is wrong with his physical or mental state. Moreover, a sad

33. Ibid., 72.

34. For the importance and significance of Persian banquets, see, e.g., Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 40–41.

35. Williamson, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 178; Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 40. Despite the occasion's not being called a banquet, the words *יין לפניו*, "wine before him," imply that a banquet is taking place. See, e.g., Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 213.

36. According to Josephus, Nehemiah did not prepare himself for the meeting (*Ant.* 11:163).

37. Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 159.

face can also be indicative of sad feelings or sorrow (Job 17:9).³⁸ Apparently, the king knew that Nehemiah was not ill, for if so, he would not have come to serve him. He therefore realized that there must be some other reason for his servant's sadness. He says: "This is nothing else but bad thoughts" (Neh 2:2).

In Old Persian, the phrase "bad thoughts" refers to demonic powers, while the phrase "good thoughts" refers to "*amesha spentas*," divine powers that are the opposite of "bad thoughts." The phrase "bad thoughts," therefore, does not suggest political rebellion so much as a contradiction of spirituality, namely, evil power.³⁹ At this juncture, Nehemiah is in real danger. The staff of the court was required always to show a cheerful and pleasant expression. Any sign of dejection on a servant's face could arouse suspicion that mischief was afoot.⁴⁰ To explain Nehemiah's sad appearance, some scholars have suggested that, since hearing the bad news, Nehemiah had become sad and his facial expression somber. So, despite the danger to himself personally, he seized the opportunity to gain the king's sympathy.⁴¹

One of the characteristics attributed to Ahura Mazda was positive thinking (good spirits), which should result in good cheer, and so cheerfulness was considered gratitude toward Ahura Mazda; this was in contrast to sadness, attributed to the god of evil and responsible for spreading evil in the world. Happiness fights sadness, and sorrow is the weapon of evil. Happiness, therefore, has a religious meaning and value for Zoroastrians, and sadness strikes at the heart of their religious values. Accordingly, the believer is commanded always to be happy and avoid sadness.⁴² Therefore, the Zoroastrian king was especially sensitive to moods. He would consider sadness a sign of ingratitude and evil intentions. He related to Nehemiah's bad mood not as a transient

38. The adjacent commentary in the Septuagint adds: "And have no control over yourself." See also H. Simian-Yofre, "פנים, Panim," *TDOT* 11:589–615, esp. p. 594. For different suggestions regarding the meaning of Neh 2:2, see Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, p. 159. "Sick" is a term describing physical illness, and the reason for using the term can be understood according to its context. See K. Seybold, "(חלה), Chala," *TDOT* 4:399–409, esp. pp. 402–3.

39. This understanding was suggested to me by Prof. Gerstenberger in his personal letter of December 2007.

40. See, e.g., Peshita, Rashi, and Malbim ad loc. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 213–14. See also Dan 1:10.

41. Zarathustra taught that gratitude should be directed toward Ahura Mazda, while sadness is attributed to the god of evil and it causes evil. See Yamauchi, *Persia*, 401.

42. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism*, 125–26.

condition, but as a source of evil, and therefore Nehemiah took a great risk when he compelled the king to address him. He feared the results of eliciting the king's response, and he says that he was very frightened, but he nevertheless proceeded with his plan.

Nehemiah states that he had not been רע לפני המלך (Neh 2:2). Ancient and modern translators, commentators and investigators interpret these words as meaning that Nehemiah had never been out of sorts, that is, looked bad in the King's presence.⁴³ The proximity of the words רע (in the singular) and רעים (in the plural form) in Nehemiah's comment "I had never been out of sorts in his presence" refers to the king's question, "How is it that you look bad?" The answer could be interpreted as meaning that up to that moment his face had not been sad, whereas at the banquet he looked dejected and sad. I wish, however, to suggest a different interpretation of Nehemiah's comment within the context of the principles of Zoroastrianism.

The etymology of the word רע (evil, bad) is not completely clear, but its semantic range is clear enough: it covers anything that is not good.⁴⁴ The first impression might be that he wants to assert that he has not deviated from the *asha*, general righteousness. Many of the old *gathas* of Zoroaster implore the believers of Ahramazda to adhere to *asha*.⁴⁵

We are inclined to suggest that the word רע as used here by Nehemiah in the negative emphasizes a specific and important matter in Zoroastrianism—that Nehemiah was not considered by the king to be in a state of impurity. Rather, he was considered pure. Purity is a cardinal feature of Zoroastrianism and was significant for a man's eternal life in this ancient religion according to Choksy, who investigated its concepts of purity and impurity. The importance of purity in Zoroastrianism stems from the belief that the fate of the soul after death depends on a person's purity.⁴⁶ Moreover, it unequivocally associates purity with "good" and impurity with "bad."⁴⁷

Guided by Choksy's research, I conclude that at that critical juncture Nehemiah felt the need to stress that he was not to be judged "bad," he was not impure according to Artaxerxes' beliefs. Therefore, he had not defiled the king's cup of wine or the king himself and those surrounding him. He was "good" in the sense that he had observed the

43. See, e.g., Peshita, Rashi, and Malbim ad loc.

44. C. Dohmen, "רע, רעים," *TDOT* 13:560–88, esp. p. 562.

45. See Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, esp. pp. 7–8.

46. Choksy, *Purity*, xix.

47. *Ibid.*, xxvii.

laws concerning purity and could be trusted to attend to his task in the proximity of the king and even to come into contact with his wine.⁴⁸

Additionally, taking into consideration the observance of purity in Zoroastrianism and the somewhat similar laws of purity in Judaism, with which Nehemiah was apparently familiar and which he may have observed,⁴⁹ we think when Nehemiah says, “I had never been out of sorts [bad] in his presence,” he is expressing the hope that his service would be deemed acceptable even on this occasion, and would not be rejected in the future.⁵⁰

At the event being discussed, the spring banquet, the *shegal* (שגל, “consort”) was also present (Neh 2:6). The question is who is this person and why is her presence there mentioned? Scholars are divided on the issue of women’s participating in Persian kings’ wine banquets. Some claim that women did not generally participate⁵¹ in these banquets, and therefore it may very well be that the whole meeting did not take place in the banquet hall but in a private chamber.⁵²

48. My suggestion might arouse some skepticism, that is, if the king was strict about the purity of cup bearers, then obviously Nehemiah could not have appeared before the king unless he was pure. If he was pure, why is he compelled to mention this precisely at this time? The objection has merit. One could not appear before the king in a state of impurity to serve him wine. Thus, Nehemiah’s words “and I had never been out of sorts in his presence” express, on one hand, his great anxiety before the meeting, and, on the other hand, his hope that having had a good relationship with the king, his plan would succeed. For this reason, he emphasizes this fact before narrating the crucial meeting with the king.

49. This assumption is based on passages from the book of Nehemiah that show he was familiar with a variety of Torah laws. See for example Neh 5:7, 8:9–10, 13:15–31. Regarding Nehemiah’s connection and adherence to laws of purity and impurity, see, for example, Neh 13:29–30

50. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 11:163, 166–68), Nehemiah did not prepare for the meeting at all but heard the bad news from Jerusalem, mourned and prayed briefly to God of Heaven.

51. Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 98.

52. The Septuagint translated “And I had not been sad in his presence,” probably interpreting שָׁנַי as שָׁנַי, “other.” Because Nehemiah was in proximity of the consort, there are those who claim that he was a eunuch. See Olmstead, *History*, 314. Others believe he was not a eunuch; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 213. Yamauchi (*Persia*, 206–64) surveys the main opinions on the matter and concludes that there are no substantiated solutions. The opinion that Nehemiah might have been a eunuch may have stemmed from the phonetic similarity of the Greek words *eunoukhos* (eunuch) and *oinikhos* (cup bearer);

Others claim that attendance at such events by the kings' wives was not so rare.⁵³ Still others say that the *shegal* (שגל) here is the king's spouse because such an important festive occasion called for the presence of both the king and his consort.⁵⁴ Finally, some claim that she was not the queen at all but the king's favorite concubine in his harem.⁵⁵ Leaving this issue unresolved for the moment, no matter who the woman might be, her presence at the meeting between Nehemiah and the king—however she happened to be there—was crucial for Nehemiah.

From the description of what occurred at the meeting between the king and Nehemiah, it may be inferred that Nehemiah already served the king as cup bearer, and it is reasonable to assume that he was well acquainted with the nature of the banquets and their dynamics. He must have known, therefore, that some woman important to the king would be at this banquet, and her presence there might help Nehemiah⁵⁶ by virtue of her being able to influence the king and soften his heart. It appears quite likely that this particular woman was fond of Nehemiah⁵⁷ and would urge the king to grant Nehemiah his request.⁵⁸

Nehemiah did not conceal his suffering, and he knew he would be noticed by the king. He worked very hard to formulate a concise reply that would be suitable to the king's conundrum, for his reply was a matter of life and death, and the fate of his people and the holy city of Jerusalem depended on it. Consequently, Nehemiah's answer deserves to be analyzed thoroughly. Following the conventional and preliminary formulaic greeting of politeness and loyalty, "May the king

see Yamauchi, *Persia*, 62. On hiding women from strangers' eyes in the Persian court, according to Greek sources, see Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 85.

53. *Ibid.*, 85.

54. In the Babylonian Talmud, *Rosh Hashana* 4a, some claim that the שגל is the queen, and some claim she is the king's female dog with which the king had sexual intercourse and which the king set in the queen's place. Could this be a critical, sarcastic, ironic hint directed toward the sexual rules of the Zoroastrians, who sanctioned sexual relations that the Bible considered immoral and who held that even Ahura Mazda himself did this. Regarding this sexual behavior, see, e.g., Choksy, *Purity*, 89–90. See also Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528 and n. 14; Myers, *History*, 98; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 158.

55. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 213–15.

56. Olmstead, *History*, 315; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 98; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 162.

57. *Ibid.*, 162 n. 15.

58. Olmstead, *History*, 315; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemia*, 98; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 215.

live forever,”⁵⁹ he explains the reason for his sad expression (Neh 2:3, 5).

Jerusalem, specifically mentioned on two separate occasions when its precarious state came up (Neh 1:3, 2:17), is not mentioned here. These two instances conspicuously illustrate that Nehemiah made a point of not mentioning Jerusalem by name in his conversation with the king, thus avoiding focusing attention on what had been defined by many officials as a “rebellious city” which would pose a threat to the stability and peace of the empire.

The king, too, in his response to the letter, had written that Jerusalem was indeed a rebellious city acting arrogantly and rising against kings.⁶⁰ Nehemiah was compelled to speak truthfully so that, in the future, hostile officials in the king’s palace and in the provincial administration Beyond the River would not be able to contradict his words. Therefore, when he talked about “the city of the graveyard of my ancestors,”⁶¹ he was talking about real graves of real ancestors. His words reveal to the listener that his origins were from that city,⁶² but we have no way of ascertaining whether the king had knowledge of this before. Be this as it may, the king was not at all surprised by this detail. Nehemiah, then, associates himself and the history of his family with this problematic city but does not explicitly mention it by name.

Because the building of the wall had apparently ceased at the outset of Artaxerxes’ reign, when the meeting occurred 20 years later matters concerning Jerusalem were not foremost in the king’s mind. Nehemiah, therefore, would have been anxious because he believed that even now

59. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 39.

60. Hiding the name of the city from the king is clearly indicative that according to the narrator-editor, Artaxerxes is the same king who decreed the suspension of the building of the wall. The fact that Jerusalem’s name was concealed has been pointed out by many researchers and historians such as L. W. Batten, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 192; J. J. Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah* (London: Soncino, 1951) 187; Myers, *Ezra–Nehemiah*, 99; Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 161; and Williamson, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 178.

61. The adjacent Septuagint contains a slight change: “The city and also my ancestors’ cemetery.”

62. The opinion that these words do not mean that Nehemiah was a descendant of the royal house of David seems correct. See, for example, A. Demsky, “Who Came First, Ezra or Nehemiah? The Synchronistic Approach,” *HUCA* (1994) 1–9.

51; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 204–5, 214.

the enemies of Judah and Benjamin would do their utmost to thwart his plans to strengthen Jerusalem and Judah. They would use the same means they had used previously at the initial stage of Artaxerxes' reign: allegations and false accusations against the Jews of the city.

Scholars have already pointed out that Artaxerxes, an Achaemenian king, related to his ancestors' graves with reverence and honor, and so Nehemiah's anxiety about his ancestors' tombs aroused the king's sympathy.⁶³ Moreover, Nehemiah's formulation referring to Jerusalem as "the city of the graveyard of my ancestors" must have reminded the king of the way Persian kings were buried.⁶⁴ This familiarity with the burial customs of the kings also added to creating a sense of closeness between the king and Nehemiah. Therefore, we believe that Nehemiah chose to begin his answer to the king with this piece of information not only for personal and emotional reasons but mainly because he thought that the Zoroastrian king would be sensitive and attentive to information such as this, which accords with the Zoroastrian perception of death and the duties the living owe the dead.

One of the Zoroastrian beliefs was that the body of a dead person defiles the earth and water, which the Zoroastrians held as sacred. Thus, a dead body could not be buried in the ground but had to be left out in the open until the flesh had been consumed by animals and birds. Only after the flesh had been consumed could the bones be buried.⁶⁵

When was this custom adopted by the general population? This question has no easy answer. Investigators of the pre-Parthian and pre-Sesenite period of Zoroastrianism differ sharply on the issue of how Zoroastrians handled and buried the dead in that period. The custom of leaving the dead in the open so their flesh would be consumed may very well reflect orthodox doctrines and was already practiced by the

63. See Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 12; Slotki, *Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah*, 188–93; Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 214; Zer-Kavod, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1980) 30 [Hebrew]; Williamson, *Ezra Nehemiah*, 179; M. F. Kotwal and J. K. Choksy, "The Praise of Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stum Ritual's History and Functions," in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context* (ed. M. Stausberg; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 389–401.

64. Williamson, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 179; Blenkinsopp (*Ezra and Nehemiah*, 214) claims that this explanation is speculative. We believe that the archaeological facts uncovered at the tombs of the Achaemenian kings shed light on the issue and that this explanation is plausible. See de Jong, *Traditions*, 439–40; Huff, "Archaeological Evidence," 614–18.

65. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 45.

Magi priests in the period of the Achaemenid Dynasty,⁶⁶ but there is no archeological evidence to substantiate the existence of this practice, and it may have become widespread in a later period.⁶⁷ In the Achaemenian period, this practice had not yet taken root, but Zoroastrians seem already to have believed that a dead body must not touch the humid ground.⁶⁸

Scholars of the Achaemenian period do agree, however, that the Achaemenian kings were buried and that their bodies were not exposed in the open until the flesh was consumed. This conclusion is grounded in the evidence available to us from the enormous Achaemenian tombs of Cyrus and other Achaemenian kings, which were carved out of solid rock, from Greek descriptions of the robbed tombs of Cyrus and Darius and from descriptions of embalmed bodies taken out of the golden tomb at the site.⁶⁹ However, the Achaemenian kings were careful not to violate the principles of Zoroastrianism. They were not interred, therefore, in graves below the ground but were buried in house-like structures built on big man-made stone mounds that separated the body from the humid ground.⁷⁰ This seems to have been the custom prevailing at the time of Artaxerxes.

66. Regarding the exposure of the dead body in the early period of Zoroastrianism, see *ibid.* For comprehensive archaeological research on the subject of handling the dead, their exposure, funeral and burial in Zoroastrianism from the archaic period and up to the early Islamic period, see de Jong, *Traditions*, 432–44; Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” and especially pp. 295–596, 306–8.

67. In Zoroastrianism, the human body is considered sacred. Various components of the person, such as his vitality, thinking and intellect belong to Ahura Mazda; his other parts belong to different celestial identities so that the whole body is a sort of microcosm. However, after death, the body is considered impure, indeed the most impure thing of all. See Choksy, *Purity*, 14, 104–7, 124.

68. That this practice had not yet taken root: see Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 158–59; de Jong, *Traditions*, 432–44; Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” 596, 603, 609–10, 614–15. From the Babylonian Talmud, in *Sanh.* 46:B, it can be inferred that the Zoroastrian custom of exposing the dead until their flesh was consumed and only then burying the bones may have led to polemics between the Jews who lived in Babylonia and the Zoroastrian Persian kingdom. See E. Ahdut, “Jewish-Zoroastrian Polemics in the Babylonian Talmud,” in *Irano-Judaica* 4 (1999) 17–40, Hebrew 19–21. That a dead body must not touch the ground: see Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” 614–15, 618.

69. See Choksy, *Purity*, 17; Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” 614–15. See also Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 158–59; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 419–21; de Jong, *Traditions*, 439.

70. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 59; Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” 615.

In Zoroastrianism, death is considered a temporary condition. The soul is eternal, and although it has become separated from the body, it makes contact with the living, and so it must be honored at appointed times. The living have clear duties to perform for the dead. The dead require worship, sacrifices, food offerings, and various ceremonies.⁷¹ The graves served the dead, and so they had to be preserved. Thus, the Zoroastrian king believed the dead require a proper burial, religious rituals, and sacrifices.⁷²

Nehemiah's performance of rituals and religious duties for the dead in general and for his ancestors in particular is expressed in his explicit request to leave the king for a specified period of time in order to restore the city of his ancestors' graves. His request conforms to the basic Zoroastrian views of what is required for the dead. Therefore, the restoration of such a city does not imply either an attempt at rebellion or divided loyalties. Nehemiah hoped and believed that the king would understand that it was incumbent on Nehemiah to perform his religious and moral duty to restore the city where his forefathers were buried, an act that did not at all contradict his loyalty to the king.

Another element sacred in Zoroastrianism is fire. Fire is the sign of Ahura Mazda, the symbol of light and good.⁷³ Fire is the icon of the divinity, but not a divinity itself, so it would be wrong to define Zoroastrians as fire worshipers.⁷⁴ It is part of the Iranian cults, and because of its importance the kings also participated in the fire cults. A great part of the life of the individual and of the community at large revolves around the various kinds of fire.⁷⁵ Consequently, it was suggested that every believer should go to the fire temple three times a day and pay his respects

71. W. Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage* (New York : Simon & Schuster, 1935) 372; Kotwal-Choksy, *The Praise*, 390–92; for more details on basic Zoroastrian concepts in the past and present reflected in ceremonies for the dead, see D. Luddeckens, “Bruch und Kontinuität in Todesritualen: Beobachtungen zu Westeuropäischen und Zoroastrischen Bestattungen,” in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context* (ed. M. Stausberg; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 153–72, esp. pp. 153–56, 171–72.

72. Durant, *Heritage*, 372; K. Mistree, *Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective* (Bombay: Good Impressions, 1982) 58; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 433; Kotwal-Choksy, *The Praise*, 389–91.

73. Yamauchi, *Persia*, 407. Fire is considered to be the son of Ahura Mazda. See de Jong, *Traditions*, 344. Regarding important aspects of the sacred fire, its nature, and its virtues, see Mistree, *Zoroastrianism*, 93–103.

74. Yamauchi, *Persia*, 344.

75. On the centrality of fire in various religions and in Zoroastrianism, see de Jong, *Traditions*, 344. Regarding its functions in handling the dead and their burial, see Huff, “Archeological Evidence,” 609.

there. The devout observer was assured of good health and holiness.⁷⁶ Because fire was considered sacred, worshipers were forbidden to touch impurity with it or to use it for secular purposes; it was to be used for religious rituals only. One who desecrated fire was liable for penalties.⁷⁷ Additionally, fire also expressed the king's authority, and the one who used it illicitly would be guilty of insulting the king.⁷⁸ In the context of the sanctity and importance that the Zoroastrians attributed to fire, and the probability that Artaxerxes was also a true believer, we wish to suggest that at the very beginning of his words Nehemiah intentionally chose to say to the king that the city of Nehemiah's ancestors' graves lay waste. He also added that "its gates have been consumed by fire." The expression used here, "consumed by fire," is unique in all of Scripture. It should be noted that Hanani and the men from Judah that described Jerusalem's state, and Nehemiah as well in his efforts to encourage the population to cooperate in rebuilding the wall, did not say that "its gates have been consumed by fire," but "were set on fire" (Neh 1:3, 2:17).

Taking the phrase "were set on fire" as implying a military attack without any mention of its results (Jer 49:27, Amos 1:14) is quite different from understanding the phrase "consumed by fire" the same way. The latter phrase connotes total (and possibly even wanton) destruction. We can infer that Nehemiah wanted to stress to the king that fire was desecrated because it was used for total destruction.⁷⁹ This brief sentence too is based on fundamental Zoroastrian principles.

Not only religious principles furthered Nehemiah's goal. The meeting with the king also reveals Nehemiah's political astuteness. Besides the desecration of fire as a very convincing reason for taking action against the transgressors, he mentions a specific point that exposes the criminality of those who had acted against the king's laws. Should the

76. Yamauchi, *Persia*, 401. Regarding the sites where the fire cult was performed, see e.g., Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 60.

77. The Zoroastrian believer preferred dying a hard death to desecrating fire. See de Jong, *Traditions*, 438–439, who quotes a poem written by Dioschorides in the third century B.C. See also Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 44.

78. Boyce, *History I*, 60–61.

79. Nehemiah and the king apparently conducted their conversation in Persian, not Hebrew; in spite of this, we can discern that Nehemiah formulated his sentences in Persian so that the king could distinguish between the phrase "consumed with fire" and "set on fire." This does not mean that the Achaemenians or even the Parthians, who certainly were Zoroastrian, abstained from using fire in war or to lay a siege to a city. We believe that the use of fire in absolute contravention to the king's express command constituted not only an insult to the king, but also a desecration of its sacredness.

king ask Nehemiah to identify by name the city of the ancestors' graves, and should the explicit mention of Jerusalem arouse concerns about its political history, Nehemiah could give the king a decisive and irrefutable answer: the Jews had never rebelled against the king's rule or against any Persian king before him. On the contrary, the men who had leveled allegations against the Jews of Jerusalem did so by not carrying out the king's instructions. The king had instructed them to stop the building of the wall without harming the Jews, and so avoid unrest in the kingdom, but they had wantonly disobeyed the king's commands by striking at the Jews with armed attacks. The result of their wanton actions was the complete destruction of the gates of the city, a clear case of insubordination to the king's wishes and instructions and the desecration of the sanctity of fire. That in itself was a rebellious act against the king.⁸⁰

Nehemiah wishes to travel to the city that was defined as rebellious in order to restore it. To do so, he needed a royal order to rescind the previous injunction against the rebuilding of the city wall. Nehemiah said to the king, "If it please the king . . . send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' graves, to rebuild it" (Neh 2:5). Should this request be taken as a hint to the king to appoint him as the provincial governor? Why is he asking to rebuild the city himself instead of working through the agency of the local governor and the appointed officials residing there? In order to achieve his purpose, it would be sufficient to ask the king to rescind the temporary injunction suspending the rebuilding of the wall following the letter accusing the Jews of seditious intentions and to order the governor of the province Beyond the River, who also administered the province of Judah,⁸¹ to rebuild the wall. The wall would be rebuilt, and Nehemiah could remain at the king's court as cup bearer. However, Nehemiah asks to go to Judah himself to rebuild the wall; he asks to be allowed to supervise and take an active part in the rebuilding, not just control it from afar.

This request was no simple matter at all, as noted above, for the king earlier ordered a cessation of the rebuilding of the wall following the letter he had received stressing that a rebuilt Jerusalem would constitute a threat to the peace of the Persian Empire (Ezra 4:7-21). However, by the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign, the king had succeeded in strengthening his hold throughout the empire, so that he did not think there

80. See also Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 161.

81. See for example, A. Demsky, "The Days of Ezra and Nehemiah," in *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 4: *The Restoration—The Persian Period* (ed. B. Mazar; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1983) 49-55, esp. p. 52 [Hebrew].

was any real external threat to his kingdom. Nevertheless, his sensitivity to the province Beyond the River in general and to the Judean province in particular was certainly no secret; both the king and Nehemiah were well aware of it.⁸² Therefore Nehemiah knew he had to be cautious and act wisely. It certainly appears that he weighed every move he made very carefully during the days between his meeting Hanani and the men of Judah (Neh 1:1–4), and the banquet that took place in the month of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign (Neh 2:1).

The fusion of the two values already mentioned—the restoration of the graves and the prohibition against the desecration of fire—was meant to complement the two values. The former was directed at arousing the king's sense of reverence for the dead; the latter was directed at shocking the king by informing him of a flagrant violation of a sacred belief. These two values are associated with a third in the royal political doctrine. It was “the empire or preferred government” whose purpose was to maintain the stability of the government in the empire. This doctrine enabled Nehemiah, the trusted cup bearer of the king of the Persian Empire, to ask permission to travel to Jerusalem and stabilize the situation.⁸³

The king's considerations in granting Nehemiah's requests and the course of the negotiations and its details are not stated in the book of Nehemiah. Scholars have addressed the issue of what motivated Artaxerxes I, who was forced to fight internal and external enemies,⁸⁴ to allow Nehemiah, a Jew who possessed Jewish national and religious affinity with his people, to travel to the rebellious city in order to restore it. This, despite the fact that the king had forbidden the rebuilding of its wall not so long before then. Several explanations have been suggested, and they can be divided into the following categories: the immediate cir-

82. With Artaxerxes' ascendancy to the throne, many difficulties arose in the area, mainly unrest in the region close to Egypt. See Olmstead, *History*, 312–13; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 149; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 204; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 249–523.

83. Wieschofer, *Persia*, 37–38.

84. Some claim that the king in our discussion here is not the one who forbade the rebuilding of the wall. See for example: G. Fohrer, *Geschichte der Israelitischen Religion* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1968) 367; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 253–55; P. R. Ackroyd, “The Jewish Community in Palestine in the Persian Period,” in *Cambridge History of Judaism* (ed. W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein; London: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 159–160. But mainly because of the description of the course of events, it is likely that the king in question is the same king. See notes 3 and 4 above. For Artaxerxes' fighting external enemies, see Olmstead, *History*, 315.

cumstances, the personal and interpersonal aspect, the political aspect, and the religious aspect.

The immediate circumstances can be summarized by the assumption that the king was inebriated with wine and not in control of his natural instincts.⁸⁵ Feeling in high spirits—the cup bearer at his service and his consort at his side—he was too far gone to identify Nehemiah's city as the rebellious city of Jerusalem; all he cared about on this occasion was to know how long his loyal cup bearer would be gone. This claim seems too superficial, and is, therefore, difficult to accept. Indeed, it is very likely that he was in high spirits at the banquet,⁸⁶ but on sobering up he might have corrected his mistakes and compelled Nehemiah to pay dearly for having taken advantage of the king's momentary weakness. Such audacity might result in a personal and national catastrophe. It is unlikely that a man of Nehemiah's stature would ever act in such a mindless fashion.

Others claim that the king granted Nehemiah's request because of his personality. He was a kind-hearted and generous person.⁸⁷ In addition, Nehemiah was a close and trusted servant,⁸⁸ so why should the king suspect him and his intentions by interpreting them as a plot: Nehemiah wanting to leave his high office and foment an insurgency against him?⁸⁹

The political explanations share the claim that the king granted Nehemiah's request because he wished to attain stability throughout the empire, especially in a sensitive area such as Judah. The king's decision to allow the restoration of Jerusalem was not made out of the king's personal considerations but out of political and imperial motives; it was not made on the spur of the moment or, as it were, under the influence of the wine that Nehemiah served the king.⁹⁰

Those who advocate this approach stress several aspects, such as the king's wish to have a loyal community in the area of the conflict with Egypt.⁹¹ Also, after consolidating the empire's hold in the land of Israel, the Persians had no reason to fear a Jewish rebellion, so there was no

85. Compare Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 158.

86. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–161; see also Boyce, *History* 2, 178.

87. L. W. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 190; Olmstead, *History*, 315; Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, Boyce, *History* 2, 187; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 48, 259–60.

88. Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528; Boyce, *History* 2, 187.

89. Demsky, "Days," 51.

90. Widengren, *The Persian Period*, 528–29; Boyce, *History*, 186.

91. *Ibid.*, 188; Yamauchi, *Persia*, 251.

reason not to grant Nehemiah his requests.⁹² Moreover, although the king had ordered the suspension of building the wall, Nehemiah described the wall as having been destroyed; the king must have feared riots and unrest in the province, and besides, the destruction of the city had been carried out in spite of the king's orders to the contrary.⁹³ Furthermore, Persian kings would send various high-ranking people on fact-finding missions and to supervise administration throughout the empire, and Nehemiah's mission was no different. The king was interested in strengthening the rule of law in Judah, and for that purpose he sent Nehemiah, who was well-versed in Torah and its laws. He also wished to improve and concentrate self-rule in Judah.⁹⁴ In addition, instead of bothering to clarify details and confirm them, the king took advantage of this opportunity to rescind the order he had issued a few years before to suspend the building of the wall of Jerusalem. The order could then be canceled because the Jews and Jerusalem no longer posed a threat to the empire, and the Jews had proved their loyalty to the Persian kings. Conferring the powers of governor on Nehemiah and allowing him to fortify the wall following a prolonged period of unrest in this sensitive area not far from the Egyptian border could only help consolidate the king's hold Beyond the River.

These considerations might be valid, but for Nehemiah they were not sufficient. It should be taken into account that of all possible considerations, these appear to be the least suitable and desirable, and the most risky as well, for the king might have become suspicious and feared that these proposals could only mean rebellion, and he would take painful measures to prevent unrest and treason in this very sensitive part of his empire. It is likely that Nehemiah took into account all the data mentioned in the categories listed above, but this was simply insufficient to achieve his aims.

We believe that the most important category was the religious realm, precisely because, on the one hand, it was personal and emotional, and

92. Batten, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, 192; Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 45.

93. G. N. Knoppers, "An Achaemenid Imperial Authorization of Torah in Yehud?" in *Persia and the Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch* (ed. J. W. Watts; SBLSymS 129; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 132; L. L. Grabbe, "Israel under Persia and Greece," in *The Biblical World* (ed. J. Barton; London: Routledge, 2002) 440–57, esp. p. 443. There are those who claim that the king usually bought the nobles' loyalty by fulfilling their requests. See Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 37.

94. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 214–15

on the other hand it was also rational. It could help Nehemiah overcome various difficulties and avoid the risks of the other categories. Nehemiah, whose timing of the request was perfect, also selected his words most carefully. He was very skillful at stressing values that opened doors and paved the way to the king's heart and to Jerusalem.

He used two very important Zoroastrian principles to formulate his request. One concerned the duty incumbent on the living regarding the dead in general, and the duty incumbent on a son to honor his ancestors' graves.⁹⁵ This principle is supremely important in many cultures, and in Zoroastrianism death and the cult of the dead, and the various rituals associated with them, have special importance. The other principle is hinted at in the words "and its gates have been consumed by fire." Zoroastrianism considered fire to be sacred, and it was forbidden to use it illicitly. As stated, these words were not meant just to win points with the king and to arouse his religious feelings. They were also meant to draw the line between those who were loyal to the Persian king and those whose violent actions in Judah had left a bitter taste in his mouth.

The source of Nehemiah's courage lay in his thorough knowledge of and expertise in the secrets of the monarchy, in its religion and its laws. His wisdom, instinct and sensitivity influenced and impressed the king, and the results he achieved were far-reaching. The formulation of the whole request (Neh 2:5-9) reveals his interest in a certain measure of independence expressed in his words: "send me . . . to rebuild it," indicating that he wished to be there in person and take responsibility for rebuilding the wall. In addition, he asked the king to provide him with letters to take to the province Beyond the River and to "Asaph, the keeper of the King's Park."⁹⁶ He also asked that the king instruct the administrators responsible for issuing documents to the king's emissaries to prepare the required permits.⁹⁷

Most likely, Nehemiah did not seek to rebuild the wall only to protect the city and the temple but also to enable him to establish a central administration under his supervision that would be subordinate to his

95. Regarding the importance of the cult of the ancestors in the ancient East, see A. Skaist, "The Ancestor Cult and Succession in Mesopotamia," in *Death in Mesopotamia* (ed. B. Alster; Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980) 123-28; J. C. de Moor, "Standing Stones and Ancestor Worship," in *UF* (1995) 1-20; K. van der Toorn, "The Domestic Cult at Emar," *JCS* (1995) 35-49.

96. Asaph may have been Jewish, but it is not certain. The location of the orchard is also obscure. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 215.

97. Wiesehofer, *Persia*, 71; Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 162.

rank as governor.⁹⁸ His request that letters be given to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates so they would have to escort him to Judah (Neh 2:7) may have had a dual purpose. First of all, the letters would protect him during the journey, because the route to Judah also included provinces whose heads had participated in sending the letter to the king alleging a Jewish plot to rebel. His route must have started at Susa, the capital, and continued through Babylon, and from there to the Euphrates, Damascus, Samaria, and finally Jerusalem.⁹⁹ Second, the letters would publicize his coming to the province of Judah. He wished his coming as governor of the province Beyond the River to be widely known, hoping that his enemies would therefore not dare stand in his way, for this would be deemed an insult and rebellion against the king.¹⁰⁰

The king explicitly permitted Nehemiah to rebuild the wall and public buildings,¹⁰¹ gave him the letters he requested, and also sent captains of the army and horsemen with him (Neh 2:9), a military escort, which was customary in these cases.¹⁰² It seems that Nehemiah, the king's cup bearer, who could not resolve the difficulties in Jerusalem by remaining in the king's palace in Shushan, but also did not think it proper to remain silent at this stressful time, thought he would bring relief and deliverance to the Jews.¹⁰³ An understanding of Zoroastrian beliefs and practices illuminates the scene in Nehemiah 2. Without this illumination, the scene remains obscure.

The Focal Point of the Event

This essay has delved into the contents of Nehemiah's request at the banquet (Neh 2:1–9). The focal point of the event, which followed Nehemiah's decision to come to Jerusalem's rescue when it was deemed necessary, was the requirement to obtain the king's permission and support. This focal point can be divided into two stages: in the first stage (Neh 2:1–6), the narrator—telling the story in the first person—brings up principles from Zoroastrianism: one is expressed in the sentence

98. Grabbe, *Israel*, 443.

99. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 216.

100. On one hand he wanted to publicize his arrival, but on the other hand, fearing hostile parties within and outside the city, he concealed his plans and his moves (Neh 2:5, 9, 18; 5:14). See also Grabbe, *Israel*, 443.

101. 2:5, 9, 18; 5:14, 15. See Grabbe, *Israel*, 443.

102. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 216.

103. My paraphrase of Esth 4:13–14.

"I had never been out of sorts in his [the king's] presence" (Neh 2:1). Nehemiah, who exploited his high office to further his own plans, casts aside any doubt or suspicion that he was not worthy of his high function as cup bearer: after all, he had always been considered "pure," and not "bad/sad," meaning "impure." The other is expressed in the king's words at the initial stage of the dialogue between him and Nehemiah: "The king said to me, 'How is it that you look bad, though you are not ill?'" (Neh 2:2) Thoroughly familiar with the king's Zoroastrian beliefs, Nehemiah devises a ploy that will grab the king's attention. He knows that he must act cheerfully in the king's presence, and here he is caught violating this basic principle of the king's religious beliefs. Before Nehemiah replied to the king, the narrator informs the reader that Nehemiah felt very frightened (Neh 2:2). Indeed, there were good reasons to fear the king at this juncture. Nehemiah hoped to attract attention to himself, which he did, but the king added, "It must be bad thoughts" (Neh 2:2). For the king, the absence of happiness could indicate that the sad person had heretical tendencies, because he disavows a religious principle. In fact, he might even have been thinking of treason and other malice. At this critical juncture of the meeting, Nehemiah finds himself in a situation of do or die and is overwhelmed with fear.

The situation called for a plausible answer, and Nehemiah seems to have planned it this way. He carefully calculated the moment, specifically what he should say at that time. He opened his reply with the formulaic polite greeting that contained a declaration of loyalty to the king. In doing so, he brought up at the same time, by implication, two basic principles of the Zoroastrian faith: the destroyed city of his ancestors' graves and the sacrilegious use of fire used to consume the gates of the city.

Nehemiah's words hit their mark and have an immediate impact on the king, whose mood changes. He changes his tone and speaks softly, willing to hear Nehemiah's request for help: "What is your request?" (Neh 2:4) Again, the dialogue is interrupted by the narrator's interjection: "With a prayer to the God of Heaven" (2:4). Why did he pray? At this point, Nehemiah must have felt unbearable emotional stress; anxious about the chances of success, he turns to God for help. On the other hand, he may have felt that the critical moment had passed, and so had the risk of failure and doom, and so he offers a prayer of thanksgiving.

Nehemiah begins his reply to the king's second question with the conventional formulaic politeness and repeats the phrase "the city of the graveyard of my ancestors," again not mentioning the city's name.

Nehemiah may have repeated the phrase to stress the principle implied here because the phrase had already worked so well when he had pronounced it the first time. At this point, Nehemiah elaborates a bit more on his request and reaches its practical aims; he even says, “send me to Judah . . . to rebuild it” (2:5).

Nehemiah (and the reader too) is waiting for the king’s response. The king turns to his interlocutor to answer, but the sentence that usually follows a clause such as “the king said to me” is temporarily postponed by the narrator’s interjection “with the consort [שגל] sitting beside him” (2:6). This surprising insertion is significant. Because it is background information, it should have been located in the first verse of the second chapter, where the narrator describes the king and the banquet scene before him. However, the location of the unexpected interjection, both from the point of view of the scene and the syntax of the passage, has a function in the turning point of the story. Through this diversion in the flow of the story, the narrator hints that neither the drinking of wine nor the presence of the *shegal* at the banquet succeeded in casting aside the important matters brought up at the beginning of the meeting. On the contrary, the wine and the consort were overshadowed the moment Nehemiah obtained the king’s attention. The four Zoroastrian principles had created a corridor for subliminal persuasion. The second stage in the development of the dialogue begins at this point. The two men are practical, brief, and to the point. The discussion deals with Nehemiah’s request in greater detail.

There is a substantial difference between the initial section of the dialogue and its continuation and conclusion. The first stage of the dialogue is very brief, and its flow is interrupted by the narrator’s comments and insertions. We notice his great stress and anxiety. The second stage is characterized by clarity, uninterrupted narrative flow, and the self-assured formulation of the request, which branches out into its related components. At the end of this stage, Nehemiah’s efforts—which focused on some Zoroastrian principles as persuasive tactics—are crowned with success. This is expressed by the king’s granting all his requests and the transition from discussion to action.

Prayer as Rhetoric in the Book of Nehemiah

MARK J. BODA

Introduction

There is little question that the study of prayers within the narratives of the Hebrew Bible has been dominated by a form critical agenda influenced by research on the Psalter, with the focus on classifying the various types according to their literary components and sociological settings.¹ Additionally, some have attempted to situate narrative prayers in a typology of prayer forms in ancient Israel, with Westermann tracing this as a chronological development (from simple prose

Author's note: I am thankful to Bob Becking, whose review of my 1999 volume on Nehemiah 9 (*RBL*) spurred me on to consider the role of that prayer in the rhetoric of the book of Nehemiah. In this essay, I restrict myself to synchronic narrative methodology, but for my explorations of the redaction history of Nehemiah see my "Redaction in the Book of Nehemiah: A Fresh Proposal," in *Unity and Disunity in Ezra–Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, Reader* (ed. M. J. Boda and P. Redditt; Hebrew Bible Monographs 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2008) 25–54.

1. See especially the work of A. Wendel, *Das freie Laiengebet im vorexilischen Israel* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1931); L. Krinetzki, *Israels Gebet im Alten Testament* (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch, 1965); H. G. Reventlow, *Gebet im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986); P. D. Miller, *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); and the considerable work now done on penitential prayers; cf. M. J. Boda, D. K. Falk, and R. A. Werline, eds., *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 1: *The Origin of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature / Leiden: Brill, 2006); idem, eds., *Seeking the Favor of God*, vol. 2: *The Development of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 22; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature / Leiden: Brill, 2007). Notice how H. Gunkel and J. Begrich (*Einleitung in die Psalmen: Die Gattungen der Religiösen Lyrik Israels* [2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933]) used narrative prayers as the basis for reflection on the *Sitz im Leben* of Psalmic forms.

to poetic psalms to complex prose) and Greenberg as contemporaneous expressions (patterned prose prayer, ritual prayers, and unconventional artless prayer).² Alongside this form-critical agenda was always a tradition-critical enterprise that sought to delineate the development and use of ideology within the prayers themselves.³

These two approaches to the study of prayer were clearly diachronic in character, focusing on the developmental process behind the prayers. In contrast, more recent literary methodologies have highlighted the value of synchronic study of the prayers within their present literary contexts. Greenberg called attention to the rhetorical function of prayer when he argued that “embedded prayers . . . play a part in the argument of a narrative and its depiction of character.”⁴ However, it was Balentine who offered a sustained study of the rhetorical function of prayer embedded in Hebrew narratives. Balentine lays out his agenda as follows:

I concentrate on prayer as a literary vehicle for providing characterization (of both pray-er and God), for addressing certain themes (e.g., divine justice), and for conveying and promoting certain postures or attitudes (e.g., penitence and contrition) . . . also concerned to attend to the use of prayer as a means of conveying ideological and theological perspectives, again in relation to both God and human partner.⁵

This is not to deny that others had offered more limited analyses of prayers in their narrative contexts, whether that was Weinfeld’s work on the deuteronomic “liturgical oration” tradition that had influence even on the prayers of Daniel, Nehemiah, and Chronicles or Staudt’s evaluation of prayer in the Deuteronomistic History.⁶ Also, von Rad,

2. C. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982) 154–56; M. Greenberg, *Biblical Prose Prayer as a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983) 46.

3. G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966); J. H. Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (SBLEJL 14; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999); M. J. Boda, *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9* (BZAW 277; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999).

4. Greenberg, *Prose Prayer*, 17–18.

5. S. E. Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 29.

6. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 42; E. Staudt, *Prayer and the People in the Deuteronomist* (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1980) 338.

Noth, and Plöger all pointed to the significance of the “Levitisches Predigt” (Levitical sermon), a form that included not only speeches but also prayers.⁷ Throntveit drew on this earlier scholarship to investigate both the royal speeches and royal prayers in Chronicles, especially their role in expressing the ideology and structure of the Chronicler’s work.⁸ With Duggan came close attention to the place of prayer in the covenant renewal ceremony of Nehemiah 8–10 and in Ezra–Nehemiah as a literary complex.⁹

The present work is focused on the agenda set out by Greenberg in his study of prose prayer, which was at least partly fulfilled in the studies of Balentine and Duggan. Most of the work has been more ideological in orientation, that is, investigating the ideology that the prayers introduce into the text. Balentine added to this close attention to characterization through prayer, and Duggan added a focus on structural considerations.¹⁰ Although diachronic analysis still dominates the field of Ezra–Nehemiah studies, works such as those of Eskenazi, Throntveit, and Davies have provided an initial foundation for further rhetorical and literary work.¹¹ The focus of this essay will be on prayer in all of its forms in the book of Nehemiah, and because of that we will begin with a consideration of the different narrative types and their relationship to types of speech.

7. Von Rad, *Hexateuch*, 267; M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History* (JSOTSup 15; Sheffield: JSOT, 1981) 5–6, 80–81; O. Plöger, “Reden und Gebete im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtswerk,” in *Festschrift für Günther Dehn zum 75 Geburtstag* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1957) 35–49.

8. M. A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* (SBLDS 93; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987).

9. M. Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra–Nehemiah (Neh 7:72b–10:40): An Exegetical, Literary, and Theological Study* (SBLDS 164; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001).

10. See the recent contribution of S. van den Eynde on the role of prayer in the plot development of Judith (“Crying to God: Prayer and Plot in the Book of Judith,” *Bib* 85 [2004] 217–31).

11. G. F. Davies, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); M. A. Throntveit, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992); T. C. Eskenazi, *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra–Nehemiah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). Eskenazi really focuses on the “exceptionally literary” quality of Ezra–Nehemiah with its “remarkable reverence for the written word,” a conclusion that should not be questioned (p. 5). However, this is far more important in Ezra 1–6 and Nehemiah 7–12, but does not do justice to the strong emphasis on orality in Nehemiah 1–6 and 13.

Narrative, Speech and Prayer

Speech and Narrative Types

It has long been recognized that narrators in the Hebrew Bible utilize a diversity of narrative modes to tell their stories.¹² Four categories have often been noted:

1. Direct narrative: simple reporting of the events, usually in third person
2. Dramatic narrative: presentation of the events using speeches and dialogues
3. Descriptive narrative: suspension of the action to provide a description
4. Declarative narrative: suspension of action to provide an evaluation of or clarification for the story

These types can be discerned throughout the book of Nehemiah, but to the list must be added a fifth category, documentary narrative, because of the significant number of documents (whether lists, correspondence, or proclamations) that are included in the text.¹³

12. Cf. J. Licht, who speaks of straight narrative, scenic narrative, descriptive, and comment, noting that these four modes “are practically always combined. And yet in any given story, one dominant mode will be found to determine the character of the whole” (*Storytelling in the Bible* [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1978] 29–33). R. Alter names three modes of narrative: exposition (what I call “descriptive”), narration proper (what I call “direct”), and dialogue (what I call “dramatic”; *The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 1981] 81). My terms are adapted from L. Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 43–45.

13. A. Momigliano notes the use of “documents” as a key characteristic of 5th-century B.C.E. historiography in Greek, Persian, and Jewish historiography (*The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* [Sather Classical Lectures 54; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990] 12), with thanks to Margaret Cohen; cf. M. Cohen, “Leave Nehemiah Alone: Nehemiah’s ‘Tales’ and 5th century BCE Historiography,” in *Unity and Disunity of Ezra–Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, Reader* (ed. M. J. Boda and P. Redditt; Hebrew Bible Monographs; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007). In this, we need to be careful not to import source and redactional techniques; for these, see my “Redaction.” By “documents,” I mean not different source layers that can be discerned underlying the text, but rather “documents” that are presented as such in the text. For example, many have discerned in Ezra 7–10 an underlying Ezra Memoir source in first person that has been reworked at times and supplemented by a third-person source or, better, reworked into third person. In literary terms, the first-person Ezra Memoir material is not a “documentary narrative” but rather another type of direct narrative (first person, rather than third person). On the other hand,

Assuredly, such diversity in the narrative keeps the story interesting, sparing the reader from the monotony of a single mode. However, the narrative types have each been associated with specific functions, with direct narrative used to advance the plot, dramatic and descriptive narrative to draw rhetorical focus by reducing the story's pace and sparking the imagination, and declarative narrative to offer clarification for the interpretation of the story.¹⁴ It may be suggested that documentary narrative at times lends authenticity to the account, at others introduces key information that contributes to the overall story, and at others provides the motivation for later actions in the text. Of these various modes of narrative the stories of the Bible have, as Rimmon-Kenan writes, "an overwhelming preponderance of dramatic narrative," so much so that Alter calls Hebrew stories: "narration-through-dialogue."¹⁵

"Speech" as rhetoric is usually associated with this dominant dramatic narrative mode. Speeches in such narratives are "cited speeches" or "direct discourse" and can be characterized either as monologue or dialogue. However, one should not limit the rhetorical role of speech merely to "cited speech," for narratives often employ a whole range of speech types. It was Rimmon-Kenan who identified seven types of speech presentation in narrative ranging on a continuum between (to use Socrates' terminology) diegesis, in which the narrator functions as speaker, and mimesis, in which the narrator creates the illusion he is not the speaker:¹⁶

1. Diegetic summary: the bare report that a speech act has occurred, without any specification of what was said or how it was said
2. Summary: less "purely" diegetic summary that to some degree represents, not merely mentions, a speech event in that it names the topics of conversation

the Rescript of Artaxerxes is cited as a "document" in Ezra 7–10 and thus is an example of "documentary narrative."

14. For these, see Ryken, *Words*, 44.

15. Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 69; for those interested in statistics, Gary Rendsburg claimed that 42.5% of narrative is direct quotation, let alone indirect quotation and introductions to quotation (*Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew* [American Oriental Series 72; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1990] 160); cf. C. L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis* (HSM 55; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 2 n. 2.

16. S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 2002) 110–11. Alter speaks of four types of speech: direct speech, introductory formulaic phrases, summaries of speeches, and narrative notation that a character refrained from a speech (*Biblical Narrative*, 63–87).

3. Indirect content paraphrase (indirect discourse): a paraphrase of the content of a speech event, ignoring the style or form of the supposed "original" utterance
4. Indirect discourse, mimetic to some degree: a form of indirect discourse that creates the illusion of "preserving" or "reproducing" aspects of the style of an utterance, above and beyond the mere report of its content
5. Free indirect discourse: grammatically and mimetically intermediate between indirect and direct discourse
6. Direct discourse: a "quotation" of a monologue or a dialogue; creates the illusion of "pure" mimesis, although it is always stylized in one way or another
7. Free direct discourse: direct discourse shorn of its conventional orthographic cues; the typical form of first-person interior monologue

"Speech" is a category and, therefore, cannot be limited to "dramatic narrative" (mimesis) but also functions in other narrative types. In direct narrative (diegesis), the narrator can report that a speech was made, either through a passing reference (diegetic summary) or through using indirect speech (indirect discourse) in which the basic content of the speech is summarized in the words of the narrator. One could even consider declarative narrative to be a form of speech, as the narrator's voice breaks into the story. At times, documentary narrative takes on the form of speech, especially in records of correspondence and proclamation.

It is not too difficult to claim that prayer is best characterized as a form of speech. As speech, it appears in dramatic narratives of the Bible as cited prayers (direct discourse) and usually as monologues. It also is referenced in direct narrative as reported prayer (diegetic summary) and in the declarative narrative of Nehemiah as the prayer of the narrator. For this reason, it is not surprising that research on prayer can often be found in considerations of speeches in Hebrew Bible literature, as seen at the outset of this essay. Thus, a closer look at the rhetorical function of speeches in ancient literature will orient us to some of the key possibilities for the function of prayer in Nehemiah.

Purpose of Speech in Ancient Narratives

The role of speeches in ancient literature has been the subject of much debate within the fields of classics and biblical studies.¹⁷ The fo-

17. *Classics*: For this section, I have drawn on a wealth of literature in classics and biblical studies, both of which have been influenced by methodology

cus early on in these disciplines was clearly on the issue of authenticity, spurred on by the famous statements of Thucydides at the outset of his work. In recent years, however, the focus has shifted to the rhetorical and narratological functions of speeches within ancient accounts. These various purposes are not mutually exclusive but overlap at times. In addition, a speech may be used for multiple purposes by a narrator.

from narrative and rhetorical criticism. L. Solmsen, "Speeches in Herodotus' Account of the Battle of Plataea," *Classical Philology* 39 (1944) 241-53; idem, "Speeches in Herodotus' Account of the Ionic Revolt," *AJP* 64 (1944) 194-207; T. W. Guzie, "Poetic Element in Herodotus' Speeches," *The Classical Journal* 50 (1955) 326-28; C. Hignett, *Xerxes' Invasion of Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963); K. H. Waters, "The Purpose of Dramatisation in Herodotus," *Historia* 15 (1966) 157-71; idem, "Herodotus and the Ionian Revolt," *Historia* 19 (1970) 504-8; P. Hohti, *The Interrelation of Speech and Action in the Histories of Herodotus* (Commentationes humanarum litterarum 57; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1976); M. L. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Martin Classical Lectures 28; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); K. H. Waters, *Herodotos, the Historian: His Problems, Methods, and Originality* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Phoenix Supplementary 23; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); W. J. Dominik, *Speech and Rhetoric in Statius' Thebaid* (Altertumswissenschaftliche Texte und Studien 27; Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1994); M. Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); M. B. Lang, "The Thucydidean Tetralogy (1.67-88)," *The Classical Journal* 49 (1999) 326-29; J. Marincola, *Greek Historians* (Greece and Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 31; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); D. M. Johnson, "Herodotus' Storytelling Speeches: Socles (5.92) and Leontychides," *The Classical Journal* 97 (2001) 1-26.

Biblical studies: B. O. Long, "2 Kings III and Genres of Prophetic Narrative," *VT* 23 (1973) 337-48; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*; L. Rost, *The Succession to the Throne of David* (Historic Texts and Interpreters in Biblical Scholarship 1; Sheffield: Almond, 1982); M. Sternberg, "Proteus in Quotation-Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse," *Poetics Today* 3 (1982) 105-56; A. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Bible and Literature 9; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983); J. Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983); M. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana Literary Biblical Series; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); A. Preminger and E. L. Greenstein, *The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism* (Library of Literary Criticism; New York: Ungar, 1986); Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*; S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (JSOTSup 70; Sheffield: Almond, 1989); P. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship Old Testament Series; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); J. P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: A Practical Guide* (Tools for Biblical Study 1; Leiden: Deo, 1999); Miller, *Speech*, 8-11; also see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*.

First of all, speeches are used to *advance the plot* of the story. It has long been noted that stories in the Hebrew Bible rely significantly on dramatic rather than direct narrative to present the story. These speeches enhance the scenic nature of the narrative. The speech material establishes and varies the pace of the plot, at times delaying the advancement of the action and/or focusing on a particular character to accentuate the narrative moment or character. Speeches often mark key turning points or climaxes in the structural framework of a narrative and at the same time they function as transitions between scenes, providing introductions or summations of the theme of a unit.

Second, as has long been argued, speeches *express the ideological message* of the narrator, allowing the narrator to speak into the story in subtle-yet-vidid ways. Dominik reminds us that speeches often “examine, emphasise and clarify the thematic issues raised in the main narrative.”¹⁸ They may interpret and appraise events or characters; they may highlight morals; they may draw conclusions. They can amplify and focus meaning already introduced by the narrator in the direct narrative. Sometimes this is accomplished by restating language used by the narrator in the direct narrative.

Third, and continuing the thought of the previous point, speeches *provide another point of view* on a situation distinct from the narrator. Even when voicing the ideology of the narrator, speeches introduce a voice immersed in the present of the narrative, a voice that is distinct from the narrator who must operate at a distance. In this way, the account is made vivid as the narrator is situated with the character as the character speaks. At times, though, speech can be used, as Tribble has argued, to “introduce perspectives at variance with the narrative, a second point of view to contrast the narrator’s.”¹⁹ This adds color to the account and provides a foil for the narrator to undermine.

Fourth, speeches are *used for characterization* in these ancient accounts. Through a speech, the narrator is able to convey with simplicity the inner psychology and ideology of a character. Through speeches, Innes tells us that “the characters live from the first moment. There is no need for the narrator to tell us what the people are like. Their own words reveal it.”²⁰ Dialogue can accomplish this through employing foil

18. W. J. Dominik, *The Mythic Voice of Statius: Power and Politics in the Thebaid* (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava Supplementum 136; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 69.

19. Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 173.

20. K. E. Innes, *The Bible as Literature* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930) 36–37, cited in Preminger and Greenstein, *The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism*, 66.

techniques, contrasting one character with another through the type of speech employed: short/long, simple/elaborate, balanced/asymmetrical, perceptive/obtuse.²¹

Fifth, speeches *provide motivation for subsequent action*. The focus of speeches is often not on the conceptual but rather on the pragmatic with a view to the future. Speeches thus propel the narrative forward, providing either an outline or a cause for subsequent action. Related to this is the role of speech as “prefiguration,” that is, speeches can be used to warn of approaching crisis.²² Often these speeches are left unheeded so that the ensuing disaster is evaluated as justified by the narrator.

Sixth, speeches are used to *create dramatic effect*, establishing and varying the tone, mood and emotional intensity of the work. Through speeches, the event can be presented concretely and with “experiential immediacy” rather than abstractly and removed.²³ They add variety and often relief from the monotony of direct narrative. Speeches often signal that a narrative event is important to the narrator.

Finally, speeches *provide information*, that is, they are used to record authentic tradition, either to give elements from speeches that were orally transmitted or to present and explain legitimate political choices of interest to the writer. At times, the speeches appear to provide information that is extraneous or even peripheral to the main plot, suggesting that the ancient historian was interested in recording the event.

Thus, as we can see, speech is used for many purposes in ancient narratives and only one of these is to provide information. Additionally, in light of the spectrum of speech types delineated by Rimmon-Kenan, these purposes may be attached to a greater or lesser degree to all types of speech. As we turn now to the study of prayer in Nehemiah, we will look to how prayer as speech is employed in the rhetoric of the book to accomplish these purposes.

Nehemiah, Narrative and Prayer

Nehemiah 1–13 and Narrative Structure

The two recent major proposals for the overall narrative structure of Nehemiah 1–13, that is, those of Eskenazi and Throntveit, both understand that structure in the context of a combined Ezra–Nehemiah

21. See Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 182–83

22. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse*, 21.

23. L. Ryken, *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 20–21.

literary complex.²⁴ For both, the second section of Nehemiah (for Eskenazi, chaps. 8–13, and for Throntveit, chaps. 7–13) brings closure to a project that began in Ezra 1, and in both proposals Nehemiah 13 is understood as a “coda.” Although Nehemiah may be related to Ezra in terms of its redaction,²⁵ I am not convinced that one should treat Nehemiah 7–13 merely as a conclusion to Ezra 1–Nehemiah 6. Rather, there appears to be an inner rhetorical logic to the book of Nehemiah as an independent narrative entity.²⁶

In its present shape, Nehemiah 1–13 appears to be divided into two basic sections: 1:1–6:19 and 7:1–13:31. This is suggested by the following evidence. First, at the outset of each unit, Nehemiah’s “brother” Hanani appears and plays a role in the narrative that signals the emphasis of the new phase. In 1:2–3, he leads the group, whose words describe the crisis in Yehud, the rectifying of which is the focus of chaps. 1–6. In 7:2, he is placed in charge of the newly walled city and its residents, the focus of chaps. 7–13. Second, in Neh 2:12, the autobiographical narrator makes it clear that the focus of chaps. 1–6, that is, the rebuilding of the wall, was something that “my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem.”²⁷ Interestingly, as soon as the wall is completed and Hanani

24. Eskenazi, *Prose*; Throntveit, *Ezra–Nehemiah*.

25. See Boda, “Redaction.”

26. For those who now consider Nehemiah separate from Ezra, see J. C. VanderKam, “Ezra–Nehemiah or Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes* (ed. E. Ulrich, J. W. Wright, and R. P. Carroll; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 55–75; D. C. Kraemer, “On the Relationship of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah,” *JSOT* 59 (1993) 73–92; B. Becking, “Ezra’s Re-enactment of the Exile,” in *Leading Captivity Captive: “The Exile” as History and Ideology* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 278; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 40–61; L. L. Grabbe, *Ezra–Nehemiah* (Old Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1998). Grabbe argues that the Nehemiah tradition had independence at one point but was ultimately drawn together into one corpus. An evaluation of narrative and speech types reveals considerable dissimilarity between Ezra 1–6, Ezra 7–10, and Nehemiah 1–6, 7–13. This may suggest different redactional pieces, but one must be careful with this because even Nehemiah 1–13 shows contrast. Furthermore, analysis of Herodotus’ speech types reveals a contrast between the early and later periods of his history, evidence that is used in Classics not to identify different redactional sections but rather to suggest that Herodotus had less access to and knowledge of the traditions for the early period than he had for those traditions during his own lifetime; cf. P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, *Greek Literature* (Cambridge History of Classical Literature 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 436–37.

27. Nehemiah seems to look to the rebuilding of the entire city and not just the wall in the first two chapters, but there seems to be a focus on the re-

is introduced into the text for the second time, the autobiographical narrator repeats the same vocabulary: “my God put it into my heart” (7:5), this time with the intent to “gather” (קבץ), signaling that the activity of Nehemiah from this point was related to the “gathering” of the people. The term *gather* here makes sense of the disparate materials that are now found throughout Nehemiah 7–13 and explains the considerable shift in Nehemiah’s activity in the second half of the book.

Thus the phrase in 7:1 “after the wall had been rebuilt” is a rhetorical signal in the book, marking the end of the first phase (chaps. 1–6) and the beginning of a new one (chaps. 7–13). What is interesting is that the autobiographical narrator’s voice encloses the key documents of Nehemiah 7–13 within his account. Nehemiah 13 should be seen not as a coda to the work, but rather as the closing moments of the second phase of Nehemiah’s activity, which began in chap. 7. Thus, if Ezra–Nehemiah is a unified complex, the final section of this corpus should be considered narratologically as part of the narrative level controlled and presented by the autobiographical narrator of Nehemiah 1–13.

Nehemiah 1–6

Direct Narrative

Prayer is described in direct narrative at several points throughout Nehemiah 1–6. At the outset of the book, the autobiographical narrator describes an elongated period of deep mourning over devastating news from the province of Yehud (1:4). This does serve to introduce the prayer in vv. 5–11a but has a status of its own as the narrator seeks to describe the depth (“sat down and wept . . . mourned and fasted and prayed”) and length (“for some days”) of his prayer activity.²⁸ This description of prayer is placed at the transition point in the initial scene of the book between the description of the crisis in 1:1–3 and the action taken before the king in chap. 2. This rhetorical pattern (crisis–prayer–action) is repeated throughout this section of the book.²⁹

construction of the wall in his call to his compatriots in 2:17 (which appears to be a revelation of what God had put into his heart to do for Jerusalem, v. 12): “Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem”; so also in 6:15 the focus is on the completion of the wall with a date given for it.

28. Alter (*Biblical Narrative*, 78) affirms the validity of analyzing direct narrative material that introduces speeches, a mode of speech that he considers most ubiquitous. This is what he calls “formulaic phrases that introduce the direct discourse of each speech in dialogue.”

29. Notice also Staudt’s description of prayer in DtrH. He showed how prayers are placed narratively between descriptions of crisis and resolution

The description of prayer in 1:4 stands in contrast to 2:4b, where, in the midst of a long dialogue in dramatic narrative between Nehemiah and the king, the first-person narrator slips in the statement: "Then I prayed to the God of heaven." Again, this report of prayer comes precisely at the transition point between the description of the crisis in Jerusalem that had so moved Nehemiah (2:1–4a) and his formal request to the king (2:5–8). It thus has a rhetorical role of heightening the importance of Nehemiah's response to the king's question: "What is it you want?" in v. 4a, a question that elicits the quick prayer for divine assistance.

In similar fashion, the report of prayer in Neh 4:9a is placed at the transition point between the description of the crisis in 4:7–8 and the practical action to meet the crisis in 4:9b. Here, however, one should not miss the shift from first common singular ("I") of 2:4b (as Nehemiah was acting alone) to the first common plural ("we") of 4:9a, as Nehemiah was now leader of the community.³⁰

At only one point is there a report of the prayer of the people, that is, the response of the assembly in 5:13 which involved praise. This is followed by the monological declaration of the people, "Amen," which is not a prayer, but rather a liturgical declaration of acceptance of the terms of their discipline.

References to prayers in the direct narrative of Nehemiah 1–6 are used for several of the purposes associated with speeches in ancient narratives. They provide characterization, enhance the dramatic quality of the story, and advance the plot of the story by identifying rhetorical turning points.

Declarative Narrative

Prayer also occurs in declarative narrative in Nehemiah 1–6. At two junctures, the narrator's voice breaks into the story offering insights into and evaluation of the story for the readers. At the end of the account of Nehemiah's confrontation of the abuse of the poor in Ne-

(*Prayer*, 338); cf. Balentine, *Prayer*, 21.

30. Interestingly, 5:7a appears to have a rhetorical function similar to these examples, and the vocabulary has sometimes been linked to prayer. Notice how 5:1–6 contains the description of the crisis and 5:7b–13 depicts Nehemiah's action to rectify this crisis. The language here appears to be that of a check in his spirit, "my heart controlled me," a reference to his need to check the anger described in the previous phrase ("I was very angry"). Does prayer then play a role of reflection before action? Some may also point to the role of the phrase "after I looked things over" in 4:8[14], which prefaces one of Nehemiah's speeches.

hemiah 5, the narrator breaks in with a request for God to remember what he had done for the people in protecting them against the abuse of wealthy leadership. At the end of the most intense section of opposition against Nehemiah personally (opposition not particularly linked to the wall building), there is a second prayer in the form of declarative narrative in 6:14, again using the “Remember” formula, but this time in a malediction that targets Tobiah, Sanballat, the prophetess Noadiah, and other prophets. On a rhetorical level, these prayers are extremely powerful, for they are not just a report of a prayer that was uttered by the autobiographical narrator’s character in the story, but they are the very prayer of the autobiographical narrator breaking into the narrative directly. By drawing the deity as audience into the reading process, the narrator is increasing the rhetorical weight of the declarative narrative immeasurably.

The use of speech in the declarative narrative of Nehemiah 1–6 not only heightens the dramatic quality of the story. It also shapes the plot by providing rhetorical closure to the individual scenes with which they are associated as well as to the entire Nehemiah 1–6 complex. As declarative narrative, they communicate the ideology of the narrator, making it clear that part of the agenda of this account is to amplify the accomplishments of Nehemiah and the opposition of his enemies. What is most fascinating is that the narrator accentuates not what is often considered Nehemiah’s greatest accomplishment, the building of the wall, but rather issues related to his leadership of the people and especially his just actions on their behalf.

Dramatic Narrative

At three points in Nehemiah 1–6, however, a prayer is cited in dramatic narrative. One of these is in 6:10b in which we hear a citation of a short prayer by Nehemiah, who is responding to what he imagines is the hope of the enemies that “their hands will get too weak for the work” (6:9). Nehemiah’s prayer meets this concern head on: “Now strengthen my hands.” This short prayer continues the characterization of Nehemiah in the story, accentuated here by the use of opposing dialogue.

In 4:4–5 the reader encounters an unexpected prayer which is responding this time to the verbalized taunts of the enemies in 4:1–3. While the sources of the taunts are clearly indicated in the text, the source of this prayer is not.³¹ In this, it displays the character of the

31. Miller notes this as one of the rare omissions of “quotative frame”; cf. Gen 16:7; Miller, *Speech*, 21. According to Miller, “Watson suggests that quotative frames are omitted in narrative to express an emotional reaction”; Miller,

short “remember” prayers of the declarative narrative, but the point of view of the prayer is clearly within the story and in direct response to the taunts uttered in 4:1–3. Great rhetorical weight is placed on this prayer because of its resonance with the declarative prayers. The location of this prayer in the structure of the passage is the same location as the references to prayer in the direct narrative (2:4b, 4:9b), that is, in the transition between the depiction of the crisis and the depiction of the action to rectify the crisis. This prayer thus fulfils the purpose of advancing the plot, but also infuses a dramatic quality to the narrative.

The final example of a prayer in dramatic narrative is the opening prayer in Neh 1:5–11. Our first encounter with Nehemiah’s voice in the book is a significant monologue in the form of prayer. Its position at the outset of the book is extremely important as it shapes the reading of the book significantly. This prayer at the outset of the book does serve many of the rhetorical functions reviewed above for speech in narrative. First, the prayer *advances the plot* of the story and *creates dramatic effect*, marking a key turning point in the structure of the narrative. This is odd at such an early point in the story, reminding us of the dramatic quality of the account of Nehemiah, which plunges us into significant crisis within the first three verses. Second, the prayer assists in *characterizing* Nehemiah as someone who “lives from the first moment.” We ascertain his depth of passion, his solidarity with the people, his commitment to Torah, and his grasp of theology. When mention is made of Nehemiah praying in the direct narrative of chaps. 1–6, the reader does not see this as mere convention, but imports the depth of expression and piety found in this opening prayer in chap. 1. Third, the prayer *provides motivation for subsequent action*, that is, his rebuilding of the wall in chaps. 2–6 and his “gathering” of the people in chaps. 7–13. In vv. 10–11 he foreshadows the conversation with the emperor in chap. 2 which will set the rebuilding project in motion (the focus of chaps. 2–6), but one should also not miss that vv. 8–9, with its promise to “gather” (קבץ) the exiles to “the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my name” (that is, Jerusalem), foreshadows the second phase of Nehemiah’s mission, which is signaled in 7:5 as “gathering” (קבץ) the people in Jerusalem. Finally, the prayer *expresses the ideological message* of the

Speech, 220 n. 132; cf. W. G. E. Watson, “Abrupt Speech in Ugaritic Narrative Verse,” *UF* 22 (1990) 415–20. Rimmon-Kenan would consider this “Free Direct Discourse,” which is “Direct discourse shorn of its conventional orthographic cues.”

narrator. The citation of Moses' promise that refers to the ingathering of those who are scattered among the nations echoes the theme of the speech cited in 1:3, that is, that the remnant is to be found among those who have "survived the exile and are back in the province." Clearly, the hope for the province lies with the *golah* and Nehemiah is cast as one of the godly remnant who respond to the agenda laid out in Torah for bringing an end to the exile. From the outset, the wall rebuilding is subsumed under the ideological rubric of restoration which entails a religious (penitence and obedience) and communal (gathering of people) dimensions.

Nehemiah 7–13

Direct Narrative

Prayer is mentioned in direct narrative in the description of the dedication of the wall in Nehemiah 12. All of these descriptions depict the community celebrating with thanksgiving and praise (12:27, 40, 43). The only other instance of prayer appearing in direct narrative is in the elongated description of the day of confession in Neh 9:1–5. There we are told that the Israelites separated from all foreigners, confessed sin, read from the Torah, and worshipped YHWH. The two long lists of Levites in vv. 4–5 highlight the communal and sacerdotal character of the prayer that follows.

References to prayer in the direct narrative thus are used to characterize the community, in chap. 12 as a community caught up in worship as they dedicate the city and in chap. 9 as a community sensitive to the rhythms of worship, Torah reading, and penitence. In both cases these references to prayer advance the plot by emphasizing a key moment. Through these, the ideology of the narrator shines through, identifying the need for separation from foreign influences that would threaten the holy city.

Declarative Narrative

Prayer is also introduced into the story through the declarative narrative of the "remember prayers" in 13:14, 22b, 29, 31b, echoing the earlier prayers encountered in 5:19 and 6:14 with their focus on exalting Nehemiah's work (13:14, 22b, 31b) and cursing his enemies (13:29). These declarative prayers also echo the earlier prayers in their lack of focus on the wall-building project. In these prayers, the issues are related to the purity of temple-priestly law and practice. Again in terms of rhetoric, these prayers play a significant role in the narrative, for in them the autobiographical narrator breaks into the narrative directly

seeking to shape the reader's response. The reader is left with these four staccato bursts of declarative narrative as the story comes to a close. Being cast in the form of prayer lends them even more than the usually heavy weight afforded declarative narrative. The reader cannot argue with one who is willing to voice his evaluation before the deity.

These prayers in declarative narrative infuse a dramatic quality into the narrative and, as the earlier examples in Nehemiah 5 and 6, serve as rhetorical markers signaling the end of this section of the Nehemiah (Nehemiah 7–13). As is the character of declarative narrative, these prayers communicate clearly the ideology of the narrator, emphasizing the accomplishments of Nehemiah and the opposition of his enemies. As in Nehemiah 1–6, it is again fascinating that the narrator completely ignores the wall building and instead accentuates Nehemiah's role in maintaining purity in Torah observance related to the temple, its sacred services, and its personnel.

Dramatic Narrative

The dominant prayer in Nehemiah 7–13 is unquestionably the long Levitical prayer of Nehemiah 9. This occurs in a sequence of documents that Nehemiah cites and revises in Nehemiah 7–12, documents that he identifies in 7:5 as related to “those who had been the first to return.”³² These documents appear to be focused on the character of this early community, expressed through both genealogical connection to the community (chaps. 7, 11, 12) and liturgical practice in community (chaps. 8–10). While the genealogical connection is expressed through documentary narrative (chaps. 7, 11, 12), the liturgical practice is expressed through direct and ultimately dramatic narrative (Nehemiah 8–10).

What then is the rhetorical function of this prayer in Nehemiah 9? First of all, it *advances the plot* of the story. Taking up the documents now found in Nehemiah 8–10 and including his name into the accounts, Nehemiah identifies the actions appropriate to the community that he is “gathering” to fill this city. As Duggan has argued, Nehemiah 8–10, taken now as a unit, suggests the structure of a covenant renewal. The prayer in Nehemiah 9 is situated in the rhetorical position just prior to the action promised in the covenant document articulated in Nehemiah 10, a position strikingly similar to the position of prayers throughout Nehemiah 1–6.³³

32. See my view on these revisions in “Redaction.”

33. See Duggan, *Covenant Renewal*.

Second, the prayer is used for *characterization*. Here, we see clearly the character of the community appropriate to this restored city, not only in the direct narrative describing the depth and length of their penitential rites in 9:1–5 but also in the depth and length of the penitential prayer that issues from their lips. The prayer is spoken in community, by a sacred Levitical group, relating the story of the community and confessing its failures on the communal level. The prayer in Nehemiah 9 echoes the piety of Nehemiah displayed at the outset of the book, heightening even further the intimate connection between Nehemiah and the people already evident in the prayer in Nehemiah 1.

Third, the prayer provides *motivation for subsequent action*. In the immediate context, it lays the foundation for the covenant document in Nehemiah 10, while in the broader context it foreshadows the enduring need for repentance among a people who must continue to separate from foreign entrapment (Neh 13:1–9) and from disobedience (Neh 13:10–31).

Finally, the prayer *expresses the ideological message* of the narrator. This is seen not only in the description of the character of the community Nehemiah was seeking to “gather” but also in shaping the response of people who must continue to live in the wake of unfulfilled restoration promises. This is displayed in the contrasting points of view in the prayers in Nehemiah 1 and Nehemiah 9. While Nehemiah 1 presupposes life in exile from which exiles will be gathered (1:8–9), Nehemiah 9 presupposes life in “the land you gave our ancestors” (9:36). While Nehemiah 1 asks for “favor in the presence of this man,” Nehemiah 9 grumbles about the abusive power of the foreign kings “you have placed over us.” While Nehemiah 1 confesses sins in short stereotypical speech, Nehemiah 9 expands this confession to rehearse the entire history of Israel’s misdeeds. The prayer of Nehemiah 9 thus seeks to shape the character of the community which will now be gathered from exile. They must move beyond the mere reconstruction of a wall, to the renewal of a people through separation from the surrounding nations, repentance from misdeeds and observance of Torah stipulations, especially related to the temple and its worship. This matches the significant shift in the account of Nehemiah that is showcased in Nehemiah 7–13, especially the shift in the autobiographical account to an exclusive focus on liturgy and Torah observance (chaps. 12–13). Furthermore, it explains the fact that no declarative narrative even mentions the wall project, but they rather focus either on Nehemiah’s leadership of communal and cultic reforms or on opposition from those outside the legitimate community.

Conclusion

Summary

This essay has highlighted the ubiquity of prayer in the book of Nehemiah. It has shown that prayer is utilized to accomplish many of the purposes often associated with direct discourse in ancient literature: internal characterization, dramatic effect, rhetorical structure, plot advancement, and ideological interpretation.

Implications

The Study of Nehemiah

This investigation of the prayers in Nehemiah offers another window into the narrative quality and integrity of Nehemiah 1–13. Through the prayers one can see more clearly the emphasis in the book on piety, community, and worship, rather than wall building. This emphasis is not restricted to the second section of the book but is evident from the outset of the book in the first words and actions of the protagonist and even in the declarative narrative in Nehemiah 1–6. The documents and presentations in Nehemiah 7–12 are thus not aberrations in the narrative logic of the book of Nehemiah but bring to the fore themes suggested in the first phase of the book. The evidence in this essay may bring into question the necessity or even validity of reading Nehemiah in light of Ezra 1–10.

The Study of Prayer

This essay has sought to refine reflection on the rhetorical function of prayer within narrative contexts. It has shown that one should not limit this reflection to mimetic rehearsals of prayers but should also consider diegetic descriptions of prayer. The focus has not been on the rhetoric of the prayers as independent entities but rather on the rhetoric of the prayers within their narrative contexts.

While I have treated prayer as a form of speech throughout, this study has brought to light the potency of prayer in rhetoric. While speech enlivened ancient narratives, providing a vivid mode for communicating ideology, prayer raises the rhetoric to a whole new level as it draws the reader into the intimate and authoritative environment of religious speech, an environment where even deity listens. It was difficult in the ancient world to challenge a speech such as this.

Index of Authors

- Abadie, P. 178
 Ackroyd, P. R. 49, 65, 155, 260
 Aharoni, Y. 92, 156, 198, 215
 Ahdut, E. 256
 Ahlström, G. W. 92
 Albertz, R. 77, 137, 153, 155, 226, 227, 231
 Albright, W. F. 122
 Allen, M. J. 168
 Alt, A. 122, 123, 198, 199, 214, 215
 Alter, R. 270, 271, 273, 275, 277
 Andrewes, A. 29
 Aristotle 16, 17, 22, 25, 26
 Asher, J. ben 194
 Avigad, N. 104, 116, 120, 122, 238
 Avishur, Y. 167, 178
 Avi-Yonah, M. 4, 78, 119, 120, 122, 123, 197, 226

 Bailey, N. A. 77, 218
 Balentine, S. E. 268, 269, 278
 Baltzer, K. 40, 41
 Bar-Efrat, S. 273
 Barkay, G. 109, 120
 Battenberg, J. F. 61
 Batten, L. W. 12, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 153, 163, 170, 203, 216, 217, 218, 223, 224, 230, 232, 235, 254, 255, 261, 262
 Becker, J. 225, 226
 Becking, B. 228, 267, 276
 Bedford, P. R. 13
 Begrich, J. 267
 Ben-Ami, D. 115
 Ben-Dov, E. 4
 Ben-Dov, M. 123, 124
 Benveniste, E. 160, 161
 Berger, P.-R. 157
 Berlin, A. 273
 Berquist, J. L. 38, 42, 64, 239
 Bewer, J. A. 233
 Bianchi, F. 159
 Biran, A. 161

 Blenkinsopp, J. 21, 27, 31, 40, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 56, 57, 65, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 87, 88, 89, 92, 94, 97, 152, 157, 160, 163, 164, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 195, 198, 201, 203, 211, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 225, 229, 230, 236, 241, 242, 244, 245, 248, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 260, 262, 263, 264
 Boda, M. J. 8, 267, 268, 270, 276, 282
 Bodi, D. 161, 167
 Bogolyubov, M. N. 160
 Böhler, D. 5, 136, 214
 Bongenaar, A. C. V. M. 172, 173
 Bowman, R. A. 93
 Boyce, M. 242, 243, 244, 247, 248, 250, 251, 255, 256, 258, 261
 Breasted, J. H. 34
 Briant, P. 155, 158, 161, 167, 168, 170
 Briend, J. 157, 174, 178
 Bright, J. 227
 Brockington, H. L. 217, 241, 242, 245
 Brooke, A. 200
 Broshi, M. 116
 Buckley, T. 29, 30, 31
 Burns, R. 158
 Burrows, M. 76, 77, 78, 83

 Cahill, J. M. 106, 108
 Carter, C. E. 93, 198, 205, 213, 214, 217, 218, 228, 239
 Castelbajac, I. de 170
 Choksy, J. 247, 251, 253, 255, 256, 257
 Clay, A. T. 175
 Clemens, D. M. 154
 Clines, D. J. A. 12, 38, 40, 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 52, 57, 77, 78, 92, 213, 216, 223, 225
 Cody, A. 173
 Cogan, M. 78, 83, 93, 95, 96, 98, 172
 Coggins, R. J. 77, 203, 218
 Cohen, M. 270

- Cohen, R. I. 61
 Contreras, E. M. 194
 Corò, P. 172
 Cowley, A. E. 69, 159, 229, 240
 Cross, F. M. 215, 240
 Crowfoot, J. W. 103, 109, 110, 111,
 112, 113, 114, 115, 122, 123
 Ctesias 18

 Dahood, M. 146
 Dandamaev, M. A. 38, 178
 Daud, A. 62
 Davies, G. F. 269
 Demsky, A. 93, 156, 164, 170, 254,
 259, 261
 Dequeker, L. 153
 Dohmen, C. 251
 Dominik, W. J. 273, 274
 Dothan, M. 161
 Duggan, M. 269, 282
 Dunayevski, I. 161
 Duncan, J. G. 106, 107, 117
 Durant, W. 257
 Dyck, J. E. 233

 Easterling, P. E. 276
 Edelman, D. 12, 93, 94, 156, 157, 163,
 164, 168, 177, 179, 197, 198, 202,
 204, 211, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218,
 219
 Ehrlich, A. B. 81
 Emerton, J. A. 177
 Eshel, H. 4, 78, 120, 122, 123, 126
 Eskenazi, T. C. 12, 13, 38, 44, 45, 51,
 53, 73, 152, 170, 269, 275, 276
 Eusebius 18
 Eynde, S. van den 269

 Fales, F. M. 95, 96
 Falk, D. K. 267
 Faust, A. 107
 Feldmeier, R. 142
 Fensham, F. C. 77, 92, 203, 217, 218,
 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 248, 249,
 250, 253, 254, 256, 259, 260, 261,
 263
 Feuchtwanger, L. 67
 Finkelberg, M. 273
 Finkelstein, I. 5, 102, 104, 107, 116,
 117, 118, 119, 132, 133, 134, 136,
 166, 198
 Fishbane, M. 54, 55, 56, 57, 58
 Fitzgerald, G. M. 109, 111, 112, 113,
 114, 115
 Fleishman, J. 7
 Fohrer, G. 260
 Fokkelman, J. P. 273
 Fornara, C. W. 22
 Foucart, P. 97
 Frahm, E. 168
 Franken, H. J. 104
 Friedlaender, M. 175, 176
 Fried, L. S. 1, 2, 15, 19, 43, 44, 55, 59,
 94, 155, 156, 158, 167, 178
 Fulton, D. N. 6, 7

 Galling, K. 75, 76, 77, 78, 216, 217,
 225, 233
 Gerstenberger, E. H. 241, 250
 Geva, H. 104, 106, 120, 122, 125
 Gibson, J. C. L. 33
 Ginsberg, H. L. 240
 Gosse, B. 156, 177
 Grabbe, L. L. 2, 28, 30, 35, 54, 77, 78,
 94, 154, 163, 165, 167, 169, 218,
 232, 262, 264, 276
 Graetz, S. 5, 136
 Graf, D. F. 167
 Graham, J. N. 93
 Gray, J. 193
 Greenberg, M. 268, 269
 Greenfield, J. C. 160
 Greenstein, E. L. 273, 274
 Grintz, Y. M. 151, 173, 174
 Gunkel, H. 267
 Gunneweg, A. H. J. 75, 77, 135, 137,
 152, 175, 176, 214, 218, 225
 Guzie, T. W. 273

 Haasis, H. G. 67
 Halpern, B. 216
 Ḥamawī, Y. al- 158
 Hanhart, R. 200
 Hayes, J. H. 92
 Helfmeyer, J. 208, 209
 Heltzer, M. 163, 164, 166, 167
 Herodotus 2, 18, 21, 202, 273, 276
 Herrmann, S. 92, 148
 Herzfeld, L. 156
 Herzog, Z. 104, 107
 Hieke, T. 149
 Hignett, C. 273

-
- Höffken, P. 177
 Hoftijzer, J. 161
 Hoglund, K. G. 66, 93
 Hohti, P. 273
 Hölscher, G. 75, 78, 152, 179, 181
 Homer 202
 Honigman, S. 11, 18
 Hoonacker, A. van 153
 Hout, M. van den 21
 Huff, D. 247, 248, 255, 256, 257
 Hunger, H. 162
 Hurowitz, V. A. 5, 81, 147

 Innes, K. E. 274
 Isaac, B. 158

 Janzen, D. 213, 231, 238
 Japhet, S. 13, 151, 152, 216, 225, 240
 Jepsen, A. 164, 170
 Johnson, D. M. 273
 Jong, A. de 243, 244, 255, 256, 257, 258
 Jongeling, K. 161
 Jonker, L. 209
 Josephus 11, 101, 102, 119, 120, 147, 161, 174, 238, 240, 244, 249, 252
 Jursa, M. 165, 171
 Justi, F. 161

 Kaiser, O. 78, 179, 224
 Kalimi, I. 12, 37, 63, 151, 152, 197, 210, 223, 225, 241
 Kallai, Z. 79, 215
 Karrer, C. 77
 Kaufman, S. A. 161
 Kellermann, U. 51, 57, 75, 76, 77, 78, 136, 144, 152, 181, 209, 214, 225, 240
 Kenyon, K. M. 102, 104, 105, 106, 115, 117, 118
 King, P. J. 106
 Kippenberg, H. G. 27
 Kirchner, J. 97
 Kittel, R. 78, 81, 146
 Klinkott, H. 157, 163
 Kloner, A. 104, 180
 Klostermann, A. 169
 Knauf, E. A. 104, 124, 125, 135, 152, 228, 239
 Knoppers, G. N. 41, 73, 94, 197, 198, 212, 213, 219, 239, 262

 Knowles, M. D. 226
 Knox, B. M. W. 276
 Kochavi, M. 174
 Koch, I. 104
 Koch, K. 181
 Kochman, M. 77
 Kusters, W. H. 157
 Kotwal, M. F. 255, 257
 Kraemer, D. C. 276
 Kratz, R. G. 75, 76, 137
 Kraus, H. J. 146
 Krinetski, L. 267
 Kuhrt, A. 66

 Lanfranchi, G. B. 95
 Lang, M. B. 273
 Lang, M. L. 273, 275
 Lateiner, D. 273
 Lebram, J. C. H. 174
 Lecker, M. 158
 Leemans, W. F. 175
 Lemaire, A. 153, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 167, 169
 Lernau, O. 108
 Levin, Y. 16, 180
 Lewis, B. 158
 Licht, J. 270
 Lipschits, O. 3, 5, 79, 99, 104, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 139, 155, 158, 159, 166, 172, 173, 180, 197, 198, 200, 209, 211, 213, 214, 217, 218, 219, 228, 232, 239
 Liver, J. 156, 159, 164, 170, 171, 176, 181
 Long, B. O. 273
 Longman, T., III 165
 Luckenbill, D. D. 168
 Luddeckens, D. 257
 Lukonin, V. G. 38

 Macalister, R. A. S. 106, 107, 117
 Mann, V. B. 61
 Marcus, D. 6, 190
 Marcus, J. 62
 Marcus, R. 174
 Marincola, J. 273
 Marquart, J. 173
 Mazar, A. 106, 107
 Mazar, B. 103, 104, 109, 161
 Mazar, E. 102, 104, 106, 107, 109, 117, 118

-
- McCarter, P. K. 206, 212
 McLean, N. 200
 Memmi, A. 38
 Meyer, E. 78, 92, 155, 157, 159, 173, 181
 Meyers, E. M. 159
 Migne, J.-P. 18
 Miller, C. L. 271, 273, 279
 Miller, J. M. 92
 Miller, P. D. 267
 Mistree, K. 257
 Mittmann, S. 174
 Momigliano, A. 270
 Moor, J. C. de 263
 Morgan, T. 17
 Mowinckel, S. 75, 77, 78, 147, 152, 173, 177, 214
 Myers, J. M. 77, 78, 83, 87, 88, 89, 198, 213, 217, 218, 241, 242, 245, 252, 253, 254

 Na'aman, N. 5, 73, 93, 108, 120, 132, 133, 157, 168, 215
 Naveh, J. 88, 156
 Newman, J. H. 41, 268
 Norin, S. I. L. 225
 Noth, M. 78, 92, 135, 225, 269
 Notley, R. S. 155, 202, 216, 219

 Oeming, M. 5, 139
 Olmstead, A. T. 65, 241, 252, 253, 260, 261
 Oppenheimer, A. 158
 Orwell, G. 37

 Parpola, S. 95, 96
 Pelling, C. 16
 Pericles 27, 31, 35
 Pichon, C. 58
 Plöger, O. 269
 Pohlmann, K.-F. 152, 232
 Polaski, D. 2
 Polybius 202
 Porten, B. 12, 73, 159
 Porter, J. R. 175
 Postgate, J. N. 95, 96
 Preminger, A. 273, 274

 Rad, G. von 192, 209, 214, 268, 269
 Radner, K. 161
 Rainey, A. F. 155, 156, 202, 216, 219

 Rashi 12, 250, 251
 Redditt, P. L. 7, 241
 Reich, R. 102, 104, 108, 115
 Reinmuth, T. 5, 58, 65, 75, 77, 79, 82, 144, 165, 225
 Rendsburg, G. 271
 Reventlow, H. G. 267
 Rhodes, P. J. 31
 Ries, R. 61, 68
 Rimmmon-Kenan, S. 271, 273, 275, 280
 Ríos-Zarzosa, G. S. 194
 Ritmeyer, K. 120
 Ritmeyer, L. 120
 Rosenmeyer, P. A. 21, 22
 Rosenthal, L. A. 63
 Rost, L. 146, 273
 Rothstein, J. W. 170
 Rowley, H. H. 65
 Rudolph, W. 41, 70, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83, 87, 88, 89, 94, 175, 177, 181, 203, 214, 216, 224, 226, 232, 241, 242, 245
 Ruschenbusch, E. 29
 Ryken, L. 270, 271, 275
 Ryle, H. E. 83

 Sacchi, P. 65
 Sachs, A. 162
 Saebø, M. 225
 Sanders, J. A. 194
 Schaefer, H. 217
 Schaper, J. 170
 Schenker, A. 152
 Schneider, Z. 216
 Schunck, K.-D. 70, 215
 Schürer, E. 181
 Schwiderski, D. 154
 Sellin, E. 175
 Sérandour, A. 156
 Seybold, K. 250
 Shahar, Y. 73
 Shahbazi, A. S. 161
 Shanks, H. 107
 Shapira, B. 178
 Shiloh, Y. 102, 104, 106, 117
 Shukron, E. 102, 104, 108, 115
 Simian-Yofre, H. 250
 Simons, J. 4, 119, 120, 124
 Singer-Avitz, L. 104, 107
 Skaist, A. 263
 Ska, J. L. 194

-
- Slotki, J. J. 223, 254, 255
 Smelik, K. A. D. 3, 63, 71
 Smith, M. 27, 29, 31, 54, 77, 78, 92, 97,
 169, 170, 171
 Smith, M. S. 160
 Smitten, W. T. in der 152
 Solmsen, L. 273
 Speiser, E. A. 92
 Spek, R. J. van der 162
 Stager, L. E. 106, 116
 Staudt, E. 268, 277
 Steiner, M. L. 102, 104, 106, 117, 120
 Steiner, R. C. 13, 14, 20, 42, 43
 Sternberg, M. 273
 Stern, E. 79, 117, 120, 197, 211, 239
 Stern, S. 61
 Steve, A. 119, 120, 124
 Stiegler, S. 155
 Stolper, M. W. 162, 163
 Svennson, J. 215

 Talshir, D. 73, 152, 162
 Tchekhanovets, Y. 115
 Tejero, E. F. 194
 Thackery, H. S. 200
 Throntveit, M. A. 269, 273, 275, 276
 Thucydides 2, 22, 273
 Toorn, K. van der 263
 Torrey, C. C. 12, 14, 74, 76, 175, 177,
 180, 217, 218
 Tov, E. 198, 199, 212, 213, 220, 221
 Tribble, P. 273, 274
 Tsafrir, Y. 4, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124
 Tuland, C. G. 78, 163

 Ulrich, E. 34, 199
 Ussishkin, D. 4, 101, 104, 107, 108,
 117, 119, 120

 Vanderhooft, D. S. 158
 VanderKam, J. C. 15, 276
 Van Seters, J. 273
 Vermeylen, J. 135
 Vette, J. 5
 Vincent, H. 4, 119, 120, 124

 Waerzeggers, C. 171
 Waters, K. H. 273

 Watson, W. G. E. 279, 280
 Weil, G. E. 6, 190, 191
 Weinberg, J. 155, 213, 232
 Weinfeld, M. 92, 93, 268
 Welch, A. C. 157
 Welles, C. B. 33, 34
 Wellhausen, J. 74, 75, 152, 157, 170,
 173, 218
 Welten, P. 151
 Wendel, A. 267
 Werline, R. A. 41, 267
 Westermann, C. 267, 268
 West, S. 18, 21
 Widengren, G. 63, 65, 242, 244, 245,
 253, 254, 255, 261
 Wiesehofer, J. 241, 243, 244, 245, 247,
 248, 249, 253, 254, 260, 262, 263
 Wilcken, U. 34
 Wild, S. 158
 Wildung, S. 148
 Williamson, H. G. M. 4, 11, 12, 15, 21,
 39, 40, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 52, 57,
 73, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83,
 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93, 120, 137, 139,
 141, 153, 163, 169, 173, 198, 203,
 209, 214, 216, 218, 219, 225, 232,
 234, 237, 242, 249, 254, 255
 Willi, T. 151
 Wisse, J. 16
 Wooden, R. 199
 Wright, G. E. 215
 Wright, J. L. 38, 46, 50, 54, 75, 76, 81,
 92, 98, 137, 218
 Wright, J. W. 239

 Yamauchi, E. M. 27, 29, 35, 241, 242,
 244, 247, 248, 250, 252, 253, 256,
 257, 258, 260, 261
 Yardeni, A. 159
 Yeivin, I. 193

 Zadok, R. 5, 73, 97, 154, 158, 161,
 169, 174, 177, 178, 179, 180
 Zer-Kavod, M. 83, 255
 Zertal, A. 239
 Zevit, Z. 198
 Zwickel, W. 5, 132, 134

Index of Scripture

Genesis

2:4 200
 3:21 188, 190, 191
 6:9 200
 10:1 200
 15:18 187, 188, 190,
 192
 16:7 279
 18 196
 18:22 196
 18:32 188
 25:16 202
 32:8 208

Exodus

3:13 56
 3:15–16 56
 12:4 188
 12:11 188
 13:4 193
 13:5 56
 17:14 46
 18:5 208
 22:20–23 32
 23:15 193
 30:11–16 87
 34:28 188, 189, 195
 38:25–26 87
 40:17 193

Leviticus

18:19 188, 189, 191,
 194
 23:4 200
 23:5 193
 25:31 202
 26:34 188
 37:2 200
 37:37 200

Numbers

1:16 200

Numbers (cont.)

1:44 200
 2:32 238
 5:22 188
 21:32 207
 32:16 202
 32:42 207
 34:5 192

Deuteronomy

4:25 54
 7:3 58
 7:9 41
 7:21 41
 9:18 54
 10:18 32
 12:5 41
 13:5 54
 13:23 57
 13:23–24 57
 14:29 32
 16:11 32
 16:14 32
 17:7 54
 17:12 54
 19:19 54
 21:21 54
 22:21–22 54
 22:24 54
 23 54, 55, 57, 58
 23:3 231
 23:4–7 54
 24:7 54
 24:19–21 32
 26:12–13 32
 27:19 32
 28:32 188, 195
 30:4 41
 31:18 54
 31:29 54

Joshua

4:7 46
 10:41 180
 11:4 208
 15 6, 199, 214, 215,
 216, 217, 220
 15:4 192
 15:8 215
 15:13 215, 216
 15:21–32 215
 15:21–42 215
 15:26 216
 15:28 216
 15:32 215
 15:33–42 215
 15:35 215
 15:39 216
 15:45 207
 15:47 207
 17:11 207
 17:16 207
 18 199, 214, 215,
 216, 220
 18:16 215
 18:21–28 216
 18:24 216
 20 209
 21 219, 220
 21:11 219
 21:12 207
 21:17 216, 219
 24:14–15 56

Judges

1:27 207
 11:26 207
 17:1 164
 17:4–5 164
 17:9 164
 18:2–4 164
 18:11 208
 18:13 164

Judges (cont.)

18:15 164
 18:18 164
 18:22-23 164
 18:26-27 164
 18:31 164
 20:1 209

1 Samuel

3:20 209
 5 58
 12:6-8 56
 14:5 216
 28:12 190

2 Samuel

3:10 209
 17:11 209
 24:2 209
 24:15 209

1 Kings

9:15 108
 11 58
 11:1 58

2 Kings

10:3 188
 11:16 119
 12:6 86
 12:8 86
 12:13 87
 14:13 108
 17:24 178
 18:27 188, 191, 192,
 193
 22:5-6 86
 23:8 204
 24:7 192
 24:14 226
 24:17 226
 25:4 120
 25:10 138
 25:18 157

Isaiah

1:3 190
 1:7 188
 1:17 32
 25:5 190
 36:12 193

Isaiah (cont.)

44:7 188
 44:24-45:8 42
 58:12 144
 59:21 187, 188, 190
 60:14 145
 61:4 144

Jeremiah

1:18 148
 7:6 32
 15:20 148
 17 55, 56
 17:21-22 56
 17:25 57
 17:27 56
 21:1 156
 22:3 32
 25:20 58
 29 39
 29:25 156
 31:39 120
 32:2 119
 32:8 119
 32:12 119
 33:1 119
 35:4 156
 36:5 70
 37:3 156
 37:21 119
 38:1 176
 38:6 119
 38:13 119
 38:23 188, 189, 191
 38:28 119
 39:4 120
 39:14-15 119
 49:27 258
 52:7 120
 52:24 157
 52:28-30 226

Ezekiel

18:9 195
 40-48 145
 40:7 145
 42:10-20 145
 46:23 145

Amos

1:8 58

Amos (cont.)

1:14 258
 3:9 58
 9:11 144

Micah

6:10 188
 7:11 144

Zephaniah

2:4 58

Haggai

1:1 224
 1:4 23
 1:8 23
 1:14 224
 2:2 224
 2:21 224
 2:23 224

Zechariah

3:2 157
 7:3 235
 7:10 32
 9:6 58

Malachi

3:16 46

Psalms

46:11 146
 49:15 188
 51 146
 51:18-19 145
 104:14 187, 188, 189,
 191
 115:9-11 234
 118:3 234
 135:19 234
 150 142

Job

17:9 250

Ezekiel

48:35 145

Proverbs

3:18 86

<i>Ruth</i>	<i>Ezra (cont.)</i>	<i>Ezra (cont.)</i>
3:15 194	2:2-58 230, 232, 237	4:8-6:18 223
	2:2-63 237	4:8-9 229
<i>Song of Songs</i>	2:3-35 236	4:8-16 154
5:16 188	2:3-58 235, 236	4:12 242, 245
	2:3-60 223	4:13 136
<i>Lamentations</i>	2:14 229	4:15 46
2:8 145	2:20-33 216, 217	4:17 229
	2:20-35 232, 233	4:17-22 20, 154
<i>Esther</i>	2:23 217	4:19 245
3:7 188, 193	2:27 217	4:21 245
4:13-14 264	2:36-39 233, 234	4:22 245
6:1 46	2:36-58 233, 234	4:23 23, 39, 139, 229,
10:3 63	2:40-42 234	245
	2:42 234	4:24 20, 21, 23
<i>Daniel</i>	2:59-60 237	5 23
1:10 250	2:59-63 94, 231, 232,	5-6 42
3:27 162	237	5:1-2 24
9:4 188	2:60 231, 232, 237	5:3-4 225
9:13 188, 189, 191	2:61-63 237	5:3-5 24
9:17 188	2:61-65 233	5:7-17 154
9:24 145, 188, 189,	2:63 160	5:8 23
191	2:64 226, 230, 231	6:2 46
	2:64-3:1 237	6:2-5 154
<i>Ezra</i>	2:64-65 223	6:6-12 154
1 224, 235, 236, 237,	2:64-67 230, 237	6:11 24
276	2:65 223	6:13-16 25
1-3 25	2:68 224, 235	6:14-21 13
1-6 11, 15, 16, 17, 19,	2:68-69 234, 235	6:16-22 25
20, 25, 26, 152,	2:70 225, 235, 236,	6:19-22 25, 231
153, 224, 269, 276	237	7 15, 78
1-7 154	3 19, 236, 240	7-10 153, 270, 271,
1-10 284	3:1 237	276
1:1-3 155	3:2 24	7:1 229
1:2-4 154	4 11, 12, 14, 139	7:1-7 1
1:5-11 225	4-6 13, 24	7:6 44
1:9-11 17	4-7 12	7:12-26 154
2 6, 7, 17, 51, 94, 149,	4:1 23	7:26 64
173, 197, 198,	4:1-3 17	7:27-9:15 154
199, 214, 217,	4:1-5 14, 20	8:1-14 154
218, 220, 223,	4:1-6:15 25, 26	8:14 229
224, 225, 226,	4:4 20	8:15-20 234
228, 230, 233,	4:4-5 13, 20, 21	8:15-31 154
234, 235, 236	4:5 20, 21, 23	8:31 187, 188, 190,
2:1 217, 224	4:6 13, 20	192
2:1-2 226, 236, 237	4:6-23 65	8:33 94
2:1-3 153	4:7 12, 14	9:2 58, 231
2:1-3:1 7, 227	4:7-21 259	9:10-11 58
2:1-67 153	4:7-23 244	9:11 188, 189, 191,
2:2 173, 228, 229	4:8 20	194
2:2-19 233	4:8-6:12 43	9:12 58

Ezra (cont.)

10 154, 230
 10:1 231
 10:2 180, 187, 188
 10:6 188, 189, 195
 10:7 230
 10:8 230
 10:10 230
 10:12 230
 10:18 179
 10:18-44 154
 10:20-44 179
 10:21 176

Nehemiah

1 8, 28, 40, 65, 141,
 241, 283
 1-6 269, 276, 277,
 278, 279, 282,
 284
 1-7 153
 1-13 275, 276, 277,
 284
 1:1 1
 1:1-3 277
 1:1-4 260
 1:1-6:19 276
 1:1-7 153
 1:2 39, 231, 249
 1:2-3 276
 1:3 65, 98, 254, 258,
 281
 1:3-5 138
 1:4 138, 277, 278
 1:5 41, 188, 193
 1:5-11 8, 140, 243,
 244, 277, 280
 1:6 40
 1:7-8 40
 1:8 47
 1:8-9 283
 1:9 41, 42
 1:11 40, 242
 2 241, 264
 2:1 1, 188, 193, 260,
 265
 2:1-4 278
 2:1-6 264
 2:1-8 28
 2:1-9 7, 8, 242, 264
 2:1-10 141

Nehemiah (cont.)

2:2 244, 249, 250,
 251, 265
 2:3 98, 141, 254
 2:4 141, 243, 244,
 265, 278, 280
 2:5 42, 98, 141, 254,
 259, 264, 266
 2:5-8 278
 2:5-9 263
 2:6 252, 266
 2:7 264
 2:7-8 43
 2:7-9 28
 2:8 44, 98
 2:9 43, 264
 2:10 28, 43, 45, 46,
 55, 76, 191
 2:10-20 246
 2:11 75
 2:11-16 28
 2:12 44, 246, 276
 2:12-15 119
 2:12-16 75
 2:14 120, 187, 188,
 189, 191
 2:16 44, 246
 2:17 44, 64, 75, 254,
 258, 277
 2:18 44, 45, 64, 75,
 76, 264
 2:19 46, 55, 69, 70,
 75, 76, 188, 190,
 191, 192, 193
 2:19-20 28, 45, 74,
 82
 2:20 46, 68, 75, 78
 3 3, 92, 94, 95, 99,
 134, 164, 197,
 199, 214, 218,
 219, 220
 3-4 28
 3:1 75, 79, 80, 82, 97,
 237
 3:1-3 79, 80
 3:1-15 77
 3:1-32 46, 74, 76,
 118, 119, 153, 172
 3:2 80, 97
 3:3 79, 80, 82, 90
 3:4 180

Nehemiah (cont.)

3:6 82, 89
 3:7 174
 3:13 80
 3:13-15 77, 79, 82
 3:15 120
 3:16 120
 3:16-32 77
 3:18 171
 3:19 176
 3:19-20 75
 3:20 237
 3:23-24 229
 3:25 119
 3:28 119
 3:29 94, 156
 3:30 156, 180
 3:33 76, 78, 185, 186,
 188
 3:33-4:17 199
 3:33-35 75, 76
 3:33-37 45, 48
 3:33-38 74, 82
 3:34 188
 3:35 55
 3:36 188, 193
 3:36-37 75
 3:38 76, 81
 4-5 4
 4:1 81
 4:1-2 76, 99
 4:1-3 279, 280
 4:4-5 279
 4:4-6 48
 4:5 146
 4:7-8 278
 4:7-21 69
 4:7-24 199
 4:8 188, 190, 278
 4:9 76, 278, 280
 4:23 139
 5 28, 72, 141, 144,
 153, 279, 282
 5:1-4 170
 5:1-5 52
 5:1-6 278
 5:1-13 28
 5:4 67, 72
 5:5 188, 190, 195,
 196
 5:7 44, 252, 278

Nehemiah (cont.)

5:7-13 278
 5:13 40, 188, 231,
 278
 5:14 28, 87, 264
 5:14-15 264
 5:14-18 67
 5:16 87
 5:19 47, 281
 6 235, 276, 282
 6:1 48, 51, 76, 81, 82,
 97, 98
 6:1-4 69
 6:3 188
 6:5 50, 133
 6:5-8 70
 6:6 41
 6:6-7 49
 6:8-9 50
 6:9 279
 6:10 279
 6:10-13 70
 6:11 188
 6:14 47, 279, 281
 6:15 81, 143, 277
 6:16 76, 137, 141, 146
 6:17-19 50
 6:18 55, 94, 143
 6:18-19 94
 6:19 187, 188, 189,
 190, 191
 7 6, 7, 94, 140, 149,
 173, 197, 198,
 199, 214, 217,
 218, 220, 223,
 224, 225, 228,
 230, 232, 233,
 234, 236
 7-12 269, 282, 284
 7-13 276, 277, 281,
 282, 283
 7:1 82, 97, 98, 99, 277
 7:1-3 153
 7:1-5 225
 7:1-13:3 276
 7:2 82, 276
 7:3 82
 7:4 117
 7:5 47, 99, 235, 236,
 277, 280, 282
 7:6 217

Nehemiah (cont.)

7:6-7 226, 236, 237
 7:6-72 227
 7:6-73 7, 153, 217
 7:7 173, 228, 229
 7:7-38 236
 7:7-60 230, 235, 236,
 237
 7:7-65 237, 240
 7:8-24 233
 7:8-60 232
 7:8-62 223
 7:19 229
 7:25-38 216, 217,
 232, 233
 7:30 217
 7:31 217
 7:39 176
 7:39-42 233, 234
 7:39-60 233, 234
 7:43 176
 7:43-45 234
 7:45 234
 7:61-62 237
 7:61-65 94, 231, 232,
 237
 7:62 231, 232, 237
 7:63-65 233, 237
 7:65 160
 7:66 226, 230, 231
 7:66-67 223
 7:66-68 230
 7:66-69 237
 7:66-73 237
 7:67 223
 7:69 188, 190, 191,
 235
 7:69-71 234, 235
 7:70 160
 7:72 235, 236, 237
 7:73-8:18 51
 8 179, 236
 8-9 153, 154
 8-10 141, 269, 282
 8:1 236
 8:1-8 236
 8:1-9:5 154
 8:1-18 236
 8:2 231
 8:3 53
 8:5 49

Nehemiah (cont.)

8:6 188
 8:8 53
 8:9 53, 236
 8:9-10 252
 8:9-18 236
 8:10 188, 190
 8:13 188, 189, 191
 8:15-18 53
 8:17 231
 8:18 53
 9 8, 71, 139, 282, 283
 9-12 153
 9:1-5 281, 283
 9:4 53, 190
 9:28 188, 190
 9:32 188
 9:32-37 72
 9:36 139, 283
 10 51, 282, 283
 10:1-29 154
 10:1-40 51
 10:2 160
 10:5 170
 10:16 229
 10:25 229
 10:29-30 53
 10:30-40 153, 154
 10:31 52
 10:32 52
 10:33 87
 10:33-34 52
 10:35 41, 52
 10:36 188, 189, 191
 10:36-40 52
 10:37 41
 11 7, 99, 141, 197,
 199, 204, 212,
 214, 218, 219,
 220, 232
 11-12 197, 212
 11:1 47, 141, 188,
 196, 232
 11:1-2 117, 225, 236,
 240
 11:3 199
 11:3-12:47 213
 11:3-18 232
 11:3-24 212
 11:3-36 236
 11:4-6 154

Nehemiah (cont.)

11:7 176
 11:7-22 154
 11:10-11 181
 11:15 177
 11:18 142
 11:19 234
 11:22 177
 11:24 154, 164
 11:25 200, 203, 204,
 220
 11:25-30 215, 216,
 217, 219
 11:25-35 218, 219
 11:25-36 6, 197, 198,
 199, 200, 201,
 202, 203, 204,
 206, 207, 208,
 209, 210, 212,
 213, 214, 215,
 216, 217, 218,
 219, 220, 221
 11:26 200, 204
 11:26-27 206
 11:26-36 153
 11:27 201, 204, 208,
 209
 11:27-30 207
 11:28 204
 11:29 205, 215
 11:30 201, 202, 205,
 206, 208, 209,
 215, 218
 11:31 201, 203, 205
 11:31-35 216
 11:32 205
 11:33 205
 11:34 205
 11:35 205
 11:36 201, 219
 12 199, 240, 281
 12:1-10 154
 12:1-26 51, 153
 12:2 170
 12:3 229
 12:10-11 237, 239
 12:11-26 154
 12:16-17 180
 12:22 15
 12:23-26 154
 12:25 180

Nehemiah (cont.)

12:27 137, 281
 12:27-30 142
 12:27-43 154, 225,
 236
 12:31-40 119
 12:33 176, 180
 12:34 176
 12:35 175, 177, 179,
 180
 12:36 176
 12:39 119
 12:40 281
 12:41 176
 12:43 281
 13 15, 59, 78, 141,
 142, 237, 243,
 244, 269, 276, 277
 13:1 41, 53, 58, 231
 13:1-3 51, 59, 236
 13:1-9 283
 13:3 53
 13:4 237
 13:4-8 94
 13:4-9 28, 237
 13:4-31 153, 236
 13:6 53, 54, 59
 13:7 54
 13:8 54
 13:9 188, 190
 13:10-13 28
 13:10-14 52
 13:10-31 283
 13:13 153, 177
 13:14 47, 53, 281
 13:15 56
 13:15-22 28, 52
 13:15-27 28
 13:15-31 252
 13:17 54
 13:17-18 56
 13:18 142
 13:19 142
 13:21 57
 13:22 47, 53, 281
 13:23-25 37
 13:23-27 52
 13:25 58
 13:26 58
 13:27 54, 58
 13:28 94

Nehemiah (cont.)

13:28-29 29
 13:29 47, 281
 13:29-30 252
 13:30 51
 13:30-31 52
 13:31 47, 52, 53, 281
 13:42 176

1 Chronicles

1:29 200
 2-9 219
 2:23 207
 2:42-46 181
 2:50 200
 2:52 180
 3:1 200
 3:16-24 155
 3:17-18 163
 3:19 159
 4:3 200
 5:14 200
 6 219, 220
 6:8 216
 6:41 207
 6:55 219
 6:57 219
 6:58 219
 6:60 219
 9:2-17 155
 9:2-22 226
 9:29 188
 9:31 180
 12:23 208
 15 176
 15:19 176
 16:5-6 176
 18:1 207
 21:2 209
 24 181
 24:6-19 155
 24:7-19 234
 25:2 180
 25:15 180
 25:19 180
 26:27 86
 29:15 187, 188

2 Chronicles

5:12 176
 13:19 207

2 Chronicles (cont.)

16:10 185, 187, 188
 23:15 119
 24:4-5 86
 24:6-7 86

2 Chronicles (cont.)

24:12 87
 28:18 207
 29:3 87
 29:25 176
 30:5 209

2 Chronicles (cont.)

32:5 87
 34:8 86
 34:10-11 87
 36:2 138
 36:22-23 155

*Deuterocanonical Literature**1 Esdras*

2 11
 2:17 11
 5:36-40 231
 5:37 232
 5:40 160
 5:41 223
 5:42 223
 5:58 236

2 Esdras

4:29 161
 14:1-15:23 199
 21:25-36 198

1 Maccabees

5:8 207
 5:58 207

2 Maccabees

1:10-2 163
 2:13 43

Sirach

49:13 166

Tobit

1:22 244

*New Testament**Matthew*

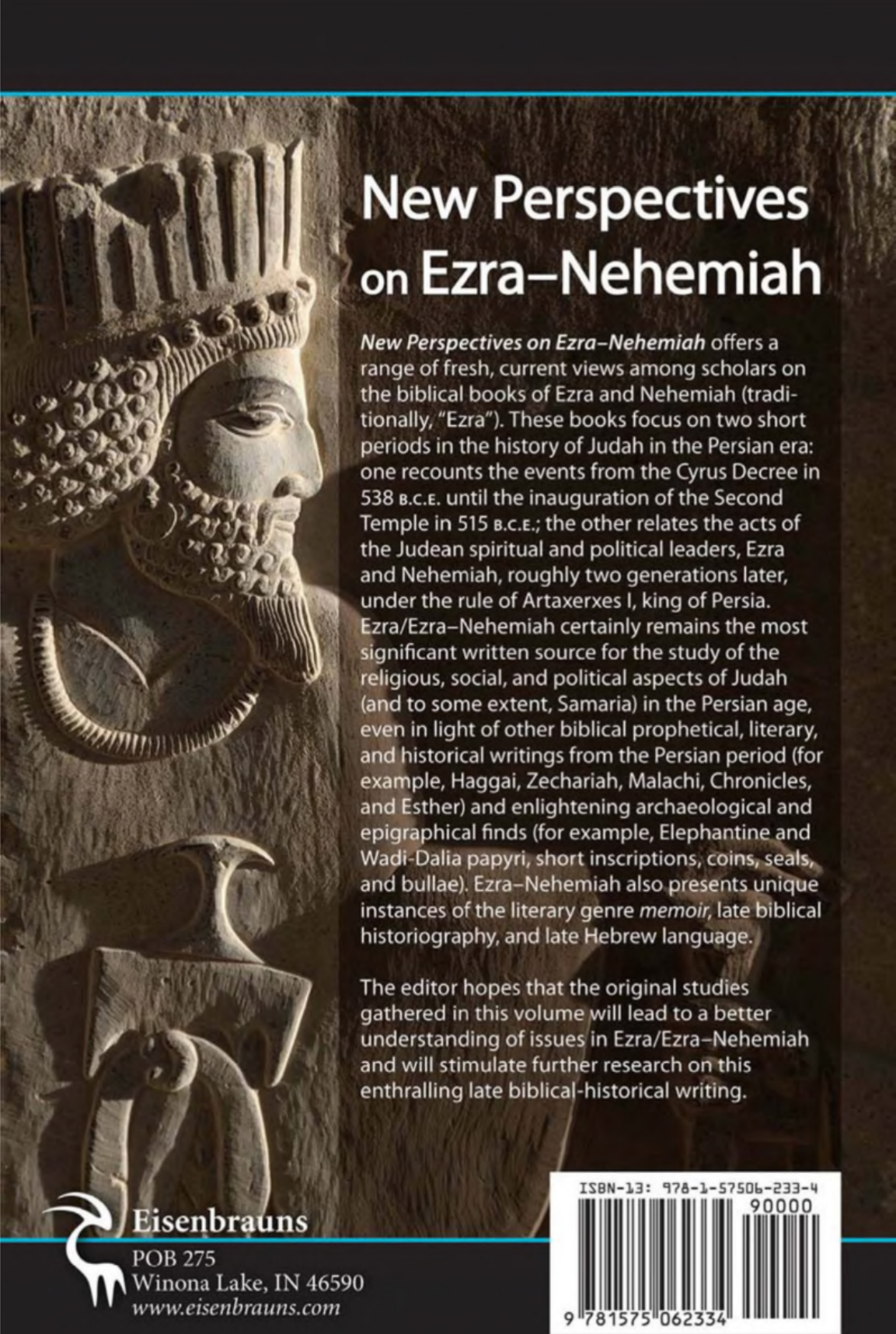
1:2-16 18
 27:53 145

Luke

3:23-38 18

Revelation

11:2 145
 21:10 145
 22:19 145



New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah

New Perspectives on Ezra–Nehemiah offers a range of fresh, current views among scholars on the biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah (traditionally, “Ezra”). These books focus on two short periods in the history of Judah in the Persian era: one recounts the events from the Cyrus Decree in 538 B.C.E. until the inauguration of the Second Temple in 515 B.C.E.; the other relates the acts of the Judean spiritual and political leaders, Ezra and Nehemiah, roughly two generations later, under the rule of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia. Ezra/Ezra–Nehemiah certainly remains the most significant written source for the study of the religious, social, and political aspects of Judah (and to some extent, Samaria) in the Persian age, even in light of other biblical prophetic, literary, and historical writings from the Persian period (for example, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Chronicles, and Esther) and enlightening archaeological and epigraphical finds (for example, Elephantine and Wadi-Dalia papyri, short inscriptions, coins, seals, and bullae). Ezra–Nehemiah also presents unique instances of the literary genre *memoir*, late biblical historiography, and late Hebrew language.

The editor hopes that the original studies gathered in this volume will lead to a better understanding of issues in Ezra/Ezra–Nehemiah and will stimulate further research on this enthralling late biblical-historical writing.



Eisenbrauns

POB 275

Winona Lake, IN 46590

www.eisenbrauns.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-57506-233-4

90000



9 781575 062334